

CONFIDENTIAL

(13255)

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

A B Y S S I N I A

PART VII

JANUARY TO JUNE 1927

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS.

Chapter	Page
I.—Arms Traffic	1
II.—Frontiers and Migration	41
III.—General	46
IV.—Raids	74
V.—Slavery	90
VI.—Tsana	109

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
Chapter I.—ARMS TRAFFIC.			
1 To the Marquess of Crewe (Paris) No. 99	1927 Jan. 10	Refers to No. 6, Abyssinia, Part VI. Instructs to urge French Government to agree as soon as possible to proposed arms meeting, as difficulties connected with arms import may spoil Mr. Bentinck's chances in Tsana negotiations	1
2 The Marquess of Crewe No. 93	" 13	Refers to No. 1. Quai d'Orsay are not impressed by argument about Lake Tsana and are still inclined to make difficulties over agreeing to arms meeting	2
3 Memorandum by Mr. Ronald, in Paris	" 20	Records interview with M. de St. Quentin, who agreed to reconsider attitude of French Government towards arms meeting in the light of further explanations offered by Mr. Ronald	3
4 Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa) No. 261	1926 Dec. 31	Reports composition and departure of special Abyssinian mission to France, the object of which cannot at present be ascertained. Possibility of establishing Abyssinian diplomatic representation in Paris	4
5 To the Marquess of Crewe No. 262	1927 Jan. 27	Transmits copy of No. 4, and instructs to ascertain object of Abyssinian special mission	5
6 The Marquess of Crewe No. 242	" 28	Transmits copies of correspondence between Mr. Phipps and M. de St. Quentin. Latter now agrees in principle to arms meeting, but urges that it be held not at Paris but at Geneva, to emphasise connection with League	5
7 Mr. Bentinck No. 6	" 6	Records conversations about the supply of arms to Abyssinia with Ras Tafari, who is still pressing for tank promised last year. Urges that Ras's request be granted, and transmits copy of letter from Ras accepting all responsibility if machine on delivery is found to be unsuitable	7
8 Mr. Bentinck No. 12	" 8	Refers to No. 7. Records conversation about the supply of arms to Abyssinia with Ras Tafari, who appeared to appreciate point of view of His Majesty's Government, but emphasised Central Government's need for arms to maintain internal order, and suggested various schemes for rationing and distributing orders between England, France and Italy	9
9 The Marquess of Crewe No. 267	" 31	Refers to No. 5. Abyssinian mission, according to M. Berthelot, are in France to purchase arms...	11
10 To Mr. Bentinck No. 5. Tel.	Feb. 3	Informs that Abyssinian mission are trying to buy arms in France, and instructs to let Ras Tafari know that story has come out despite his secretiveness	11
11 To Mr. Bentinck Nos. 7 and 8. Tels.	" 7	Informs of French agreement to proposed meeting. Instructs to explain objects to Ras Tafari and invite his agreement to meeting and his observations regarding date and place	11
12 To Mr. Bentinck No. 9. Tel.	" 7	Informs of projected terms of reference of proposed meeting. Suggests that provision of foreign instructors might be discussed	12
13 To Board of Trade	" 7	Invites concurrence of Board of Trade in proposal for meeting and for immediate application to Abyssinia of Geneva Arms Traffic Convention	12

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
14 To the Marquess of Crewe No. 337	1927 Feb. 7	Refers to No. 6, and transmits copies of Nos. 7, 8, 11, 12 and 15, and instructs to inform French Government of communications to Abyssinian and Italian Governments	13
15 To Sir R. Graham (Rome) No. 174	" 7	Transmits copies of Nos. 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12. Instructs to inform Italian Government of action taken and to invite their agreement with proposals for meeting	13
16 Mr. Bentinck No. 12. Tel.	" 17	Refers to No. 11. Has mentioned matter privately to Ras Taffari. Suggests joint invitation by three Ministers	14
17 Mr. Bentinck No. 13. Tel.	" 17	Refers to No. 11. Neither Mr. Bentinck nor his colleagues consider it advisable to suggest composition of Abyssinian delegation to Ras Taffari...	14
18 Mr. Bentinck No. 14. Tel.	" 17	Refers to No. 12. Submits that Allied Ministers, in consultation, should reply to questions	14
19 To Mr. Bentinck No. 13. Tel.	" 18	Refers to No. 18. Explains that No. 12 constituted actual terms of reference suggested. Questions can obviously be answered only by meeting	15
20 To Mr. Bentinck No. 14. Tel.	" 19	Refers to No. 16. Appreciates desirability of maintaining united front by Allied Ministers, but points out that Mr. Bentinck was only instructed to ask Abyssinian Government to agree in principle to type of meeting suggested. This can quite properly be done by unilateral <i>démarche</i>	15
21 Sir R. Graham No. 131	" 21	Transmits copy of note informing Italian Government of action taken and inviting them to express agreement with proposals for meeting	15
22 Mr. Bentinck No. 17. Tel.	" 22	Refers to Nos. 11 and 19. Believes Ras Taffari may agree in principle with proposals for meeting. Suggests that contents of No. 12 need not yet be communicated. Submits that it is for limitrophe Powers to decide what they will regard as "Central Government." Thinks foreign instructors question might be considered at meeting	16
23 To Mr. Bentinck No. 19. Tel.	" 24	Refers to No. 21. Ras Taffari cannot agree with proposals for meeting until he sees what they are. Only Abyssinian Government can say whom limitrophe Powers are to regard as Central Government. Explains that mention of provision of foreign instructors was based on idea that three Powers might enter into self-denying ordinance (to which Abyssinia would accede) not to lend white instructors	17
24 The Marquess of Crewe No. 476	" 23	Transmits copy of note from French Government agreeing generally with proposals for meeting, but asking that distribution of orders and provision of foreign instructors be not referred to meeting, and making reservation that, without waiting for meeting, France is at liberty to export to Abyssinia arms to the value of consignment sent from England last year...	17
25 To Mr. Bentinck No. 21. Tel.	" 26	Refers to No. 23. Italian Government have now unofficially agreed to meeting. Instructs to press for Paris as meeting-place, to which French would no doubt agree if Abyssinians did	18
26 To Sir R. Graham No. 276. Conf.	" 28	Transmits copy of No. 23. Informs of conversation with M. Rosso, at which were discussed: preliminary three-Power meeting, relative merits as meeting place of Paris and Geneva, suggestion that England, France and Italy should refrain from lending white instructors, date of meeting	18

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
27 Mr. Ronald to Mr. Hoyer Millar Confidential	1927 Feb. 28	Refers to No. 23. Forwards copy of No. 24. Suggests verbal and unofficial communication to keep Quai d'Orsay informed of what is happening	19
28 Mr. Bentinck No. 24. Tel.	Mar. 3	Refers to No. 19. French Minister has also suggested meeting to Ras Taffari, who proposes that it should be held at Addis Ababa. British and Italian Ministers are pressing for Paris, failing which Mr. Bentinck will urge claims of Geneva	20
29 Sir R. Graham No. 50. Tel.	" 5	Understands that Italian Government will agree to proposals for meeting, provided it is held at Paris	20
30 Sir R. Graham No. 177	" 4	Transmits copy of note and <i>aide-mémoire</i> addressed to Italian Government explaining why His Majesty's Government feel preliminary three-Power conference is unnecessary and Abyssinian participation essential from the start. Geneva as alternative meeting-place. Orders from United States of America, Belgium, &c. Possible reconsideration of solutions rejected in the past	20
31 Italian Embassy (Memorandum)	" 10	Italian Government, while satisfied on all other points, feel bound to insist on Paris as meeting-place	22
32 To Mr. Bentinck No. 27. Tel.	" 10	His Majesty's Government still prefer Paris, but would agree to Geneva if necessary. Hopes it can take place as soon as possible	...
33 Mr. Bentinck No. 26. Tel. Conf.	" 10	Ras Taffari pretends that French Minister agreed to meeting at Addis Ababa. M. Gaussen denies this. Italian Minister suspects M. Gaussen of obstructiveness	22
34 Sir R. Graham No. 60. Tel.	" 18	Does not think Italians will participate unless meeting is held at Paris	23
35 To the Marquess of Crewe No. 788	" 21	Transmits copy of No. 31. Instructs to inform French Government of attitude of Italian Government and of Ras Taffari towards projected meeting. His Majesty's Government have taken note of the French reservation (see No. 24)	23
36 Sir R. Graham No. 210	" 16	Transmits copy of note from Italian Government thanking for communication of No. 24. Takes note of French reservation, which does not, however, appear to them to be calculated to improve the prospects of the meeting	23
37 Board of Trade	" 22	Refers to No. 13. The Board anticipate considerable difficulty in arranging for application to Abyssinia alone of Geneva Convention, but are prepared to raise no objection to proposal if Sir A. Chamberlain desires to press it on political grounds	24
38 To the Marquess of Crewe No. 865	" 26	Transmits copy of No. 36 for communication to the French Government	25
39 Mr. Bentinck No. 39. Tel.	Apr. 1	Refers to No. 32. Failing Addis Ababa, Ras Taffari is indifferent whether meeting is held at Paris or Geneva, but wishes it held as early as possible	25
40 To Mr. Phipps (Paris) No. 950	" 4	Instructs to inform French Government of Abyssinian Government's views and to invite them to agree to meeting being held at Paris about 8th, 9th or 10th June	25

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
41 To Sir R. Graham No. 451	1927 Apr. 4	Instructs to inform Italian Government of views of Abyssinian Government and to invite them to agree to send delegates to Paris for first meeting on 8th, 9th or 10th June, and to inform them that similar invitation is being issued to French ...	25
42 To Board of Trade ...	" 5	Refers to No. 37. Takes note of difficulties, all of which will be borne in mind at the meeting. Will have to ask Board to enforce necessary regulations if it appears that this offers only hope of regularising Abyssinian arms traffic. Asks for draft of regulations which would be necessary if Geneva Convention were in force	26
43 To Mr. Bentinck No. 43. Tel.	" 5	Instructs to inform Abyssinian Government that France and Italy are being invited to agree to first meeting in Paris on 8th, 9th or 10th June ...	26
44 Mr. Phipps ... No. 837	" 7	Refers to No. 40. Transmits copy of memorandum handed to Quai d'Orsay inviting them to agree to first meeting in Paris on 8th, 9th or 10th June. French Government are awaiting telegram on the subject from their Minister at Addis Ababa ...	26
45 To Mr. Bentinck No. 49. Tel.	" 11	Instructs to do whatever may be possible to ensure that M. Gaussen reports Ras Tafari's wishes to his Government in the same sense as Mr. Bentinck to his	27
46 Mr. Bentinck No. 44. Tel.	" 9	Refers to No. 43. Abyssinian Government will send delegates ...	27
47 Mr. Bentinck No. 50. Tel.	" 13	French Minister has been instructed by his Government to ascertain views of Abyssinian Government on place and date of meeting ...	28
48 To War Office (Military Forces) and Home Office (Police Forces)	" 14	Asks to be informed of ratio of arms to men and arms to ammunition in forces under their control: figures to be used to assess amount of arms ammunition ordinarily required by Abyssinian army and police...	28
49 The Marquess of Crewe No. 990	" 28	Quai d'Orsay state unofficially that a favourable reply will shortly be sent officially to British proposal for arms meeting at Paris early in June ...	28
50 To Mr. Bentinck No. 53. Tel.	" 30	Informs of French agreement to meeting, and instructs to urge Ras Tafari to see that Abyssinian delegates arrive in time and with fullest instructions ...	29
51 To Sir R. Graham No. 575	May 2	Transmits copy of No. 49, and instructs to inform Italian Government and ask them to agree to first meeting on 8th June ...	29
52 Sir R. Graham No. 324	Apr. 27	No reply has yet been received from Italian Government owing to absence in Abyssinia of competent officials, but is pressing for early answer. Thinks they will ask for postponement till about 24th June ...	29
53 To Sir R. Graham No. 143. Tel.	May 3	Refers to No. 52. Instructs to inform Italian Government that if meeting does not open on 8th June His Majesty's Government will have no legal adviser available until October ...	30
54 Mr. Bentinck No. 67A. Tel.	" 4	After learning how much Abyssinian delegates will be expected to know at meeting, Ras Tafari stated that he doubted whether instructions could be prepared in time for their attendance on 8th June ...	30
55 The Marquess of Crewe No. 1033	" 5	Transmits copy of note from French Government agreeing to first meeting being held in Paris on the 8th, 9th or 10th June ...	30

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
56 Sir R. Graham No. 356	1927 May 6	Refers to No. 53. Italian officials mainly responsible for preparation of Italian case are away but, if possible, representatives will be furnished with necessary instructions in time to attend on 8th June ...	31
57 Sir R. Graham No. 113. Tel.	" 10	Italian delegates will be ready to attend on 8th June ...	31
58 To Mr. Bentinck No. 68. Tel.	" 11	Informs of Italian agreement to 8th June. If Abyssinians are not ready, meeting will have to be postponed till October ...	31
59 Mr. Bentinck No. 79. Tel.	" 11	Owing to pressure of business in connection with visit of Duke of Abruzzi, Abyssinian instructions cannot be prepared in time to allow delegates to reach Paris by 8th June ...	32
60 Home Office ...	" 10	Refers to No. 48. Informs of scale of issue of ammunition to Ulster Constabulary ...	32
61 To Mr. Bentinck No. 71. Tel.	" 16	Is reluctant to abandon hope of meeting opening on 8th June unless Abyssinians definitely cannot be ready, in which case meeting must be postponed until October ...	32
62 To War Office	" 16	Informs of Italian gift of tanks to Ras Tafari and of Italian instructors sent out to show Abyssinians how to use them. Enquires views of Army Council on general question of foreign instructors for Abyssinian army and asks whether they wish subject discussed at proposed arms meeting ...	33
63 Mr. Bentinck No. 85. Tel.	" 18	Refers to No. 61. Abyssinian delegates definitely cannot arrive by 8th June. Meeting must therefore be postponed till October ...	33
64 To the Marquess of Crewe No. 131. Tel. To Sir R. Graham No. 160. Tel.	" 19	Instructs to inform French and Italian Governments of Abyssinian inability to attend on 8th June ...	33
65 War Office ...	" 21	Refers to No. 48 and transmits tables showing arms and ammunition allowed to each branch of service in peace and war ...	34
66 War Office ...	" 28	Refers to No. 62. Wish question of provision of foreign instructors for Abyssinian army to be discussed at proposed meeting ...	37
67 The Marquess of Crewe No. 1222	" 30	Transmits copy of note from French Government agreeing to postponement of arms meeting until October ...	37
68 Mr. Bentinck No. 143	" 21	Reports circumstances in which 17,000 old Gras rifles were, by permission of French authorities, imported from Jibuti into Abyssinia ...	38
69 Mr. Bentinck No. 162. Conf.	June 1	Reports conversation with Italian Minister and Commendatore Guariglia regarding prospects of arms meeting. Question of distribution of orders among France, Great Britain and Italy...	39
70 Mr. Bentinck No. 167	" 4	Italian tank instructors. One will remain as chauffeur to Italian Minister; the other will stay on for six months as instructor at Ras Tafari's request ...	40

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
Chapter II.—FRONTIERS AND MIGRATION.			
71 To Colonial Office	1927 Jan. 3	Refers to Part VI, No. 8. Suggests that Governor of Kenya should be instructed to furnish material to explain to Abyssinia why we have apparently broken promise to return Degodia. Suggests consultation with Major Miles, now at Nairobi	41
72 Colonial Office	" 17	Refers to No. 1 and transmits copy of telegram instructing Governor of Kenya to concert with Major Miles means of removing Abyssinian misapprehensions about return of Degodia	41
73 Mr. Bentinck No. 48	Feb. 8	Reports conversation with new Governor of South-West Abyssinia, who again raised question of delimitation of the frontier. Has suggested to Ras Tafari, who agreed, that new British consul and new Governor might submit joint memorandum on question of south-west frontier delimitation...	42
74 Colonial Office	Apr. 29	Transmits copy of Kenya despatch explaining Government's attitude in the matter of the return of the Degodia to Abyssinia. Copy of Colonial Office reply to Kenya	43
75 To Mr. Bentinck No. 149	May 4	Transmits copy of No. 74. Hopes that Major Miles will be able to convince Abyssinian authorities of reasonableness of attitude of Kenya Government	45
Chapter III.—GENERAL.			
76 Mr. Bentinck No. 246	1926 Dec. 18	Refers to Part VI, No. 22. Judicial procedure. Reports conversations with French and Italian Ministers and progress of negotiations	46
77 Mr. Bentinck No. 248	" 18	Refers to Part VI, No. 26. Gives appreciation of history and standing of late Hapta Giorgis. Does not anticipate troubles as result of his death	47
78 To Mr. Bentinck No. 8	1927 Jan. 16	Refers to No. 76. Judicial procedure. Leaves to his discretion choice of opportunity to bring to notice of Abyssinian Government points raised in Part VI, No. 22. Agrees that when consul-general's court is deprived of power to pass sentence of death Abyssinian Government should be officially informed	48
79 Lord Lloyd (Cairo) No. 21. Tel.	" 26	Refers to Part VI, No. 18. New Abuna. Records conversation with Gallini Fahmi Pasha. Egyptian mission to Addis Ababa. Proposes to reply that while His Majesty's Government cannot intervene in purely religious matter, His Majesty's Legation at Addis Ababa will afford usual courtesies and assistance	48
80 To Lord Lloyd No. 23. Tel.	" 28	Concurs in proposals in No. 79 about Egyptian mission to Addis Ababa to discuss successor to Abuna	48
81 Mr. Bentinck No. 6. Tel.	" 29	New Abuna. Gives views as to proper reception of Egyptian mission at Addis Ababa	49
82 Lord Lloyd No. 29	" 19	New Abuna. Reports discussion of subject in Egyptian press. Possibility of appointment of Egyptian consul at Addis Ababa	49
83 Mr. Bentinck No. 15	" 10	Judicial procedure. Records conversation with new Swiss judicial adviser	50
84 Mr. Bentinck No. 263. Conf.	1926 Dec. 13	Heads of missions. Transmits annual report on, for 1926	50

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
85 Mr. Bentinck No. 28. Conf.	1927 Jan. 19	Gives appreciation of general political situation in Abyssinia after death of Hapta Giorgis	53
86 Mr. Bentinck No. 38	Feb. 1	Refers to No. 77. Hapta Giorgis. Reports will of, and discusses possible succession to. Ras Tafari is appointing commission to enquire into Boran, &c., raids	54
87 Sir Odo Russell (Vatican Mission) No. 34	" 24	New abuna. Reports interest of Italian press and suggestions that Abyssinia should turn not to Coptic patriarch at Alexandria, but to Rome	54
88 Lord Lloyd No. 47. Tel.	" 24	Repeats telegram to Addis Ababa recording conversation with Gallini Pasha about new abuna and Abyssinian claim to certain Holy Places at Jerusalem. Hopes that all reasonable help will be given to Gallini Pasha if he goes to Addis Ababa	55
89 Mr. Bentinck No. 19. Tel.	" 28	New abuna. Repeats telegram to Cairo. Ras Tafari will write shortly to Alexandria. Copts should not be in too much of a hurry. Ras Tafari rather surprised by proposed appointment of Egyptian consul at Addis Ababa	56
90 Mr. Bentinck No. 72. Conf.	" 28	Reports and comments on new Government appointments. All new Ministers, &c., second-rate men, in order to ensure subservience to Ras Tafari and Ras Kassa	56
91 Mr. Bentinck No. 96	Mar. 29	Refers to No. 87. Cannot believe that Abyssinians have ever thought of getting an abuna from Rome	57
92 Lord Lloyd No. 140. Tel.	Apr. 23	Refers to No. 88. Is informed that Empress and Ras Tafari have asked Coptic patriarch to appoint new abuna	58
93 Mr. Bentinck No. 66. Tel.	" 29	Refers to No. 94. Abyssinian Government have asked patriarch to give new abuna power to consecrate Abyssinian bishops	58
94 Mr. Bentinck No. 98	Mar. 29	Refers to No. 17 and reports conversation with Belata Herui, who has little hope in the future of the Abyssinian Church or the virtues of the new abuna to be appointed	59
95 Mr. Bentinck No. 138	May 9	Refers to No. 76. Judicial procedure. Reports conversations with Swiss legal adviser, French Minister and Italian Minister and nothing yet decided, though Ras Tafari now insists that final appeal must be to him, not to judge of High Court	59
96 Mr. Bentinck No. 144. Conf.	" 25	Transmits annual report on Abyssinian personalities	60
97 Mr. Bentinck No. 150. Conf.	" 25	Appointment of new abuna. Projected consecration of twelve Abyssinian bishops. Special Abyssinian mission to Alexandria to treat with Coptic patriarch...	60
98 Mr. Bentinck No. 156	" 27	Reports on visit of Duke of Abruzzi	70
99 Mr. Bentinck No. 159. Secret	" 31	Political situation in Abyssinia. Possible meeting of Empress and deposed Emperor, Lij Yasu	72
Chapter IV.—RAIDS.			
100 Colonial Office	1927 Jan. 15	Refers to Part VI, No. 45. Transmits copy of telegram to Kenya asking Governor to appoint some officer in place of Consul Hodson to take part in investigation into Galabba raid. Informs that items in schedule of claim referred to Boran and Aulihan, not to Galabba raids	74

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
101 Colonial Office	1927 Jan 15	Refers to Abyssinia, Part VI, No. 43. Explains items in schedule of claim. New schedules will be submitted when received from Kenya	74
102 To Mr. Bentinck No. 24	" 29	Transmits copy of No. 101. Promises new schedules of claims, which can be presented at Mr. Bentinck's discretion. Proposes to leave wide discretionary powers to His Majesty's Legation in these matters. Colonial Office are being asked to confer similar powers on Governor of Kenya	75
103 To Colonial Office	" 31	Transmits copy of No. 102. Suggests that details of claims, choice of opportunity for their presentation, &c., should be left to discretion of Governor of Kenya and His Majesty's Legation at Addis Ababa	76
104 Colonial Office	Feb. 11	Refers to No. 103. Agrees that details of claims, &c., shall be left to direct correspondence between Addis Ababa and Nairobi, but submits that question of whether or not a claim should be presented can best be discussed between Colonial Office and Foreign Office	76
105 To Colonial Office	" 17	Before instructing Mr. Bentinck as suggested in Nos. 103 and 104, submits that question of whether a claim is to be presented should be decided between Addis Ababa and Nairobi, reference to London only being made in case of difference of opinion between Minister and Governor	77
106 To Colonial Office	" 24	Refers to Part VI, No. 43. Informs that the late Hapta Giorgis provinces, from which most recent raids have emanated, are not likely to be assigned to anyone for a year	77
107 Mr. Bentinck No. 34	" 1	Murders of British subjects. Reports unsuccessful attempts to induce Abyssinian Government to trace and punish murderers. Requests authority to tell Ras Tafari of His Majesty's Government's concern at this inexcusable inaction	78
108 To Mr. Bentinck No. 77	Mar. 7	Murders of British subjects. Authorises to make suggested communication to Abyssinian Government and to point out that His Majesty's Government would be perfectly justified not only in protesting, but also in demanding an indemnity	79
109 Colonial Office	" 8	Refers to No. 100. Gives further explanations of items in schedule of compensation demanded by Kenya and transmits record of meeting at Nairobi to discuss affairs on southern frontier of Abyssinia	79
110 Mr. Bentinck No. 46	Feb. 8	Transmits copy of instructions to Major Miles regarding meeting with Abyssinian delegates to investigate raids into Kenya, and telegram to Nairobi informing that Ras Tafari is making all necessary arrangements for despatch of Abyssinian delegates	81
111 To Mr. Bentinck No. 83	Mar. 16	Transmits copy of No. 109. Until outcome of meeting between Major Miles and Abyssinian delegates is known, no claim need be presented to Abyssinian Government	83
112 Colonial Office	" 26	Refers to No. 105. Colonial Office think that they and Foreign Office, rather than Nairobi and Addis Ababa, ought to decide whether a claim should or should not be submitted after a raid	83
113 To Mr. Bentinck No. 99	" 30	Transmits copy of No. 112. Proposes to leave matters as they are, unless Mr. Bentinck wishes otherwise	84

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
114 Mr. Bentinck No. 121	1927 Apr. 28	Refers to No. 113. Agrees that claims ought to be presented in respect of raids regarding which irrefutable evidence exists, but claims which are impossible to substantiate cannot be presented without danger to British prestige	84
115 Mr. Bentinck No. 126	May 4	Transmits copy of note to Ras Tafari requesting enquiry into murder of a British female subject named Cheose at Maji and exemplary punishment of murderers	84
116 Mr. Bentinck No. 127	" 5	Transmits copy of note to Ras Tafari asking him to instruct Abyssinian commissioners enquiring into raids into Kenya to investigate circumstances of Aulihan raids in January 1927 on Web River and Dilhara	85
117 Mr. Bentinck No. 137	" 20	Refers to No. 116. Transmits copy of note from Ras Tafari agreeing that Abyssinian commissioners shall enquire into Aulihan raids into Dilhara	86
118 Mr. Bentinck No. 139	" 20	Refers to No. 115. Transmits copy of note from Ras Tafari stating that he has ordered an enquiry into murder, at Maji, of Cheose, a British subject	86
119 Mr. Bentinck No. 97. Tel.	June 14	Reports attack at Daggah Bur by Abyssinian soldiers, under Chief of Jigjiga, on Somali caravan carrying stores for Maharao of Kutch and Sir Geoffrey Archer. Is making urgent representations to Abyssinian Government	86
120 Mr. Bentinck No. 98. Tel.	" 14	Refers to No. 119 and asks that reports of attack may be published in the press	87
121 Mr. Bentinck No. 99. Tel.	" 15	Refers to No. 119. Ras Tafari has expressed regret and is making enquiries	87
122 Mr. Bentinck No. 100. Tel.	" 15	Refers to No. 119. It is not certain that Chief of Jigjiga led attackers of Somali caravans	87
123 To Mr. Bentinck No. 84. Tel.	" 17	Suggests making no communication to press until further details are available. Asks if Chief of Jigjiga is identical with person previously complained of on several occasions	87
124 Colonial Office	" 17	Transmits copy of telegram from Governor of Somaliland reporting attack on Somali caravan	88
125 Mr. Bentinck No. 104. Tel.	" 20	Refers to No. 121. Reports that Ras Tafari has ordered enquiry and offers to make good loss to Maharao of Kutch and Sir Geoffrey Archer	88
126 Mr. Bentinck No. 105. Tel.	" 23	Refers to No. 123. Chief of Jigjiga is identical with person complained of before, but his implication in present outrage has not yet been proved. Asks for publicity in the press	89
127 Mr. Bentinck No. 108. Tel.	" 27	Requests authority to tell Ras Tafari that His Majesty's Government expect severe punishment for those responsible for attack, full indemnification of relatives of victims and return of loot	89
128 To Mr. Bentinck No. 88. Tel.	" 30	Refers to No. 127. Authorises communication to Abyssinian Government in sense suggested. Details of attack are being given to the press	89

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
Chapter V.—SLAVERY.			
129 Mr. Bentinck No. 248	1926 Dec. 18	Refers to Part VI, No. 64. Reports that French Minister has recently discussed subject of the slave trade through Tajura with Governor of French Somaliland, who considers that his preventive measures have been effective. M. Gausson alleged that slave trade through Port Sudan was again in full swing	90
130 To Mr. Bentinck No. 11	1927 Jan. 20	Refers to Part VI, No. 69. Instructs to obtain reports from consular officers to show how much truth there is in Count Colli's statement that slavery is once more increasing in Abyssinia	90
131 The Marquess Crewe No. 297	Feb. 3	Refers to Part VI, No. 64. Transmits note from French Government claiming that anti-slavery measures taken in Jibuti preclude possibility of slave trade through Tajura. Suggests greater vigilance by Red Sea Slave Trade patrol	91
132 Lord Lloyd No. 95	" 20	Refers to No. 129 and transmits copy of despatch from Sir J. Maffey rebutting French allegations of slave traffic through Sudan. Precautions against this are effective and will not be relaxed	92
133 Mr. Bentinck No. 55. Tel.	Apr. 23	Ras Taffari is very angry because Bishop Gwynne is reported to have said in a lecture in Egypt that Mr. Zaphiro had told him that slaves could easily be purchased in Addis Ababa	93
134 Lord Lloyd No. 148. Tel.	" 27	Bishop Gwynne admits that he said in a private lecture that Mr. Zaphiro had told him a slave could be bought at Addis Ababa for £E. 10	93
135 Mr. Bentinck No. 59. Tel.	" 26	Refers to No. 133 and reports conversation with Ras Taffari, who is awaiting explanation from Bishop Gwynne, but meanwhile is both uneasy and angry and is inclined to demand recall of Mr. Zaphiro	93
136 Mr. Bentinck No. 60. Tel.	" 26	Asks if he may rely on support from His Majesty's Government if Ras Taffari continues unreasonable. Situation of Legation would become intolerable if Abyssinian Government, having succeeded in obtaining removal of Mr. Russell, now break Mr. Zaphiro	94
137 To Mr. Bentinck No. 60. Tel.	May 2	Refers to No. 136. Mr. Bentinck may rely on full support. Authorises message of caution to Ras Taffari not to provoke a quarrel relating to so delicate a subject as slavery	94
138 Mr. Bentinck No. 72. Tel.	" 4	Asks for early reply to No. 136 as situation is becoming strained	94
139 Mr. Bentinck No. 80. Tel.	" 11	Refers to No. 137, of which he has given copy to Ras Taffari, who was not impressed and who demands that Mr. Zaphiro should go on leave	95
140 Mr. Bentinck No. 81. Tel.	" 11	Inform of terms of apology telegraphed by Bishop Gwynne to Ras Taffari	95
141 To Mr. Bentinck No. 72. Tel.	" 18	Would have been inclined to instruct Mr. Bentinck to inform Ras Taffari that far from recalling him His Majesty's Government would not even consent to allowing Mr. Zaphiro to go on leave. Asks whether Mr. Bentinck thinks resistance now will or will not strengthen his hand in the long run. Quite prepared to let Tsana hang fire for some time	95
142 Mr. Bentinck No. 83. Tel.	" 23	Ras Kassa is now trying to help settle Zaphiro incident	96

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
143 Mr. Bentinck No. 91. Tel.	1927 May 28	Although Ras Taffari will not definitely promise to let Mr. Zaphiro return when wanted, feels that he must be sent on leave. Mr. Home and Mr. Maclean concur. Invites approval	96
144 Mr. Bentinck No. 129. Very Conf.	" 5	Transmits notes on slavery and the slave traffic in their consular districts by Mr. Home (Danjila), Mr. Hodson (Maji), and Mr. Plowman (Harrar)	96
145 To Mr. Bentinck No. 75. Tel.	" 31	Refers to No. 143. In the circumstances agrees to grant of leave to Mr. Zaphiro	100
146 Mr. Bentinck No. 93. Tel.	" 31	Refers to No. 143. Ras Kassa anticipates (contradicted below: see No. 151) difficulty if Mr. Zaphiro is wanted back after a few months' holiday	100
147 To Mr. Bentinck No. 78. Tel.	June 3	Instructs to defer action on No. 145 until further notice	100
148 To Mr. Bentinck No. 79. Tel.	" 11	Urges that questions be kept distinct as far as possible. Definite promise to permit return of Mr. Zaphiro ought to be obtained if possible, but he may go forthwith if insistence on promise likely to lead to serious breach... ..	100
149 Mr. Bentinck No. 148. Conf.	May 26	Transmits note on slavery and slave traffic in his district by Consul Walker (Gorei)	101
150 Mr. Bentinck No. 152	" 31	Gives details of affair arising out of Mr. Zaphiro's alleged statements to Bishop Gwynne about slavery in Abyssinia	102
151 Mr. Bentinck No. 106. Tel.	June 26	Inform of omission of negative from No. 146. Ras Taffari has now written that the incident is closed and Mr. Zaphiro may return when Mr. Bentinck so requests	108
152 To Mr. Bentinck No. 89. Tel.	" 30	Approves attitude recorded in No. 151	108

Chapter VI.—LAKE TSANA.

153 Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Murray	1926 Dec. 12	Refers to Part VI, No. 140. Gives observations on suggested boundaries of Italian sphere of economic influence. Thinks Italians ought to formulate satisfactory and reasoned claim first, but submits that whole subject might be left in suspense until it is seen what Abyssinians will say about Lake Tsana	109
154 Mr. Bentinck No. 2. Tel.	1927 Jan. 6	Refers to Part VI, No. 149. Reports conversations with Ras Taffari and requests authority to reopen Tsana negotiations	110
155 Lord Lloyd No. 811	1926 Dec. 28	Refers to Part VI, No. 146. Forwards and comments on views of Governor-General of the Sudan on limits of Italian sphere of exclusive economic influence	110
156 To Mr. Bentinck No. 2. Tel.	1927 Jan. 11	Authorises to reopen Tsana negotiations	112
157 To Mr. Bentinck No. 27	" 31	Refers to Part VI, No. 147. Asks for specific instances of non-Italian foreigners profiting by Anglo-Italian agreement at the expense of British concession seekers	112
158 Mr. Bentinck No. 4	" 6	Refers to No. 154. Records conversations with Ras Taffari, who appeared ready to reopen Tsana negotiations	113

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
159 Mr. Murray to Mr. Bentinck	1927 Feb. 3	Refers to No. 158. Reconsiders possible limits of Italian sphere of exclusive economic influence and offers working guide for use until Italians establish claim to more precisely bounded sphere ...	114
160 Mr. Bentinck No. 9. Tel.	" 3	Ras Taffari requests memorandum showing what we want at Lake Tsana for him to submit to Empress and Council of Advisers. Proposes to prepare and submit for approval before presentation ...	115
161 To Mr. Bentinck No. 6. Tel.	" 5	Approves proposals in No. 160 ...	116
162 To Lord Lloyd No. 120	" 7	Refers to No. 82. Requests to do all possible to prevent Egyptian Government from appointing mischievous politician as consul at Addis Ababa ...	116
163 Mr. Bentinck No. 20	Jan. 15	Reports conversation with Kantiba Gabru, who promised to help to clear away any misunderstandings which might arise between the Legation and Abyssinian Government in the course of Lake Tsana negotiations ...	116
164 Mr. Bentinck No. 45. Conf.	Feb. 5	Reports conversations with Ras Kassa and Ras Taffari, and submits, with comments, suggested memorandum with draft treaty annexed to be given to Ras Taffari...	117
165 Mr. Bentinck No. 86	" 15	Transmits copies of telegraphic correspondence with Khartum regarding points to be borne in mind in connection with preparation of memorandum asked for by Ras Taffari ...	122
166 To Lord Lloyd No. 63. Tel.	Mar. 9	Refers to No. 164. Suggests slight modifications of memorandum and omission of greater part of draft treaty. Invites views of Sudan on alternative procedure, enumerating possible steps ...	123
167 Mr. Bentinck No. 28. Tel.	" 17	Submits reasons for not following plan suggested in No. 165 and arguments in favour of proceeding with treaty to cover all points. Requests early authority to present memorandum and suggestions for treaty ...	125
168 Lord Lloyd No. 93. Tel.	" 22	Refers to Nos. 169 and 170. Will telegraph considered views after full discussion with Sir J. Maffey at Wady Halfa on 31st March ...	126
169 Lord Lloyd No. 94. Tel.	" 22	Repeats telegram from Khartum agreeing generally with proposals in No. 166. Suggests verbal amendments in Mr. Bentinck's memorandum. Suggestions for procedure and financial compensation for Abyssinia. Sudan in no hurry to begin actual construction ...	126
170 Lord Lloyd No. 95. Tel.	" 22	Repeats telegram from Khartum, giving in greater detail suggestions for financial compensation to Abyssinia and apportionment of shares and profits if concession is to be worked by an Anglo-Abyssinian company ...	127
171 Mr. Bentinck No. 30. Tel.	" 21	Is ill in bed, but hopes to be able to submit observations on Nos. 169 and 170 before Lord Lloyd's meeting with Sir J. Maffey on 31st March ...	128
172 To Dominions Office... Confidential	" 26	Transmits copies of Nos. 164 and 166 for the information of the Dominions ...	129
173 To Mr. Bentinck No. 35. Tel.	" 26	Hopes that Mr. Bentinck, in the light of Nos. 169 and 170, will be able to agree to proposals in No. 166, which seem to fit in well with what Ras Taffari asked for. Possibility of concession in the name of Sir G. Schuster. Visit of Mr. Home to Addis Ababa to assist in negotiations ...	129

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
174 Mr. Bentinck No. 32. Tel.	1927 Mar. 26	Refers to No. 169. Still prefers idea of treaty to exchange of notes followed by demand for concession. Comments on suggestions for financial compensation. Urges that once permission is given Sudan should lose no time in getting work started ...	129
175 Mr. Bentinck No. 34. Tel.	" 29	Still disagrees with suggestions in No. 166. If concession is asked for in name of individual it must be in name of King ...	130
176 To Mr. Bentinck No. 37. Tel.	" 29	Authorises to inform Ras Taffari that one of the Royal Princes will visit Abyssinia once Tsana Treaty is signed and will bring ratification with him ...	130
177 To Mr. Bentinck No. 38. Tel.	" 31	Foreign Office suggestions were intended as alternatives, not substitutes, for Mr. Bentinck's. Resumes procedure suggested by Foreign Office. Suggests that Ras Taffari should be given both suggestions for procedure and asked to choose ...	131
178 Mr. Bentinck No. 38. Tel.	" 31	Thanks for No. 176. Assumes that one of the King's sons will visit Abyssinia ...	132
179 To Mr. Bentinck No. 41	Apr. 2	Refers to No. 178. One of the King's sons will visit Abyssinia ...	132
180 Lord Lloyd (Assuan) No. 2. Tel.	" 3	After discussion with Sir J. Maffey, agrees to procedure originally proposed by Mr. Bentinck. Submits considered proposals for financial compensation for Abyssinia ...	132
181 Lord Lloyd (Assuan) No. 3. Tel.	" 3	Submits proposed draft of treaty on lines similar to those proposed by Mr. Bentinck ...	133
182 Mr. Bentinck No. 41A. Tel.	" 4	Notes that agreement is now practically reached on question of procedure. Asks for reasons for certain amendments proposed in words and sequence of suggestions for treaty ...	134
183 To Mr. Bentinck No. 46. Tel.	Apr. 6	Refers to No. 182. As No. 182 had been despatched by Mr. Bentinck before receipt of Nos. 180 and 181, some questions do not need immediate reply. Explains suggestions for altered words and sequence. Leaves it to Mr. Bentinck's discretion which to adopt ...	134
184 Mr. Bentinck No. 69	Mar. 1	Transmits extract from letter from Major Cheesman (consul at Danjila) reporting visit to Lake Tsana and upper Abbai River, survey of which would present extraordinary difficulties ...	134
185 Mr. Bentinck No. 70	" 1	Major Cheesman reports that Ras Hailu was asked, but has refused, to undertake construction of Lake Tsana dam ...	136
186 To Mr. Bentinck No. 48. Tel.	Apr. 11	Authorises to proceed on lines suggested by Lord Lloyd in Nos. 180 and 181. Draft of treaty in proper wording will follow by bag ...	137
187 Mr. Bentinck No. 45. Tel.	" 9	Suggests amendments in Lord Lloyd's draft treaty. Urges need for early start on construction once permission is given ...	137
188 Mr. Bentinck No. 49. Tel.	" 13	As No. 186 has crossed No. 187, will await instructions before proceeding ...	138
189 To Lord Lloyd No. 104. Tel. To Addis Ababa No. 51. Tel.	" 16	Refers to No. 187. Subject to concurrence of Lord Lloyd and Sir J. Maffey, proposes to approve Mr. Bentinck's suggestions. Suggests alternative opening for article 5 ...	138

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
190 Lord Lloyd ... No. 125. Tel.	1927 Apr. 18	Replies to No. 187. Explains reasons for points disputed in his draft treaty ...	138
191 To Lord Lloyd No. 109. Tel.	" 21	Refers to No. 189. Prefers to leave as much as possible to Mr. Bentinck's discretion. Points out that in any case draft in No. 181 will have to be modified to meet usual treaty phraseology ...	139
192 Mr. Bentinck No. 56. Tel.	" 23	Refers to No. 189. Prefers to leave article 5 as it stood. Hopes Sudan will abandon hints of possible use of aircraft and of delay in starting construction after signature of concession ...	139
193 Mr. Bentinck No. 57. Tel.	" 25	Refers to No. 190. Is prepared to agree with Lord Lloyd except as regards hint of possible use of aircraft, which ought to be abandoned ...	139
194 To Mr. Bentinck No. 143	" 28	Transmits draft treaty in usual form, which, after being brought up to date, might be given to Ras Taffari to be substituted for " suggestions " given him and hereafter used as basis for negotiations and text adopted for telegraphic correspondence ...	140
195 Mr. Bentinck No. 61. Tel.	" 27	Proposes to omit request for permission to put up telegraph line from Gallabat to Delgi ...	143
196 Lord Lloyd ... No. 150. Tel.	" 28	Refers to No. 192. Is prepared to leave details of presentation of memorandum to Mr. Bentinck's discretion ...	143
197 To Lord Lloyd No. 117. Tel.	" 28	Agrees to presentation of Lord Lloyd's draft. Formal version in treaty terminology is being sent out to Mr. Bentinck for eventual substitution for whatever he presents in the first place ...	143
198 To Mr. Bentinck No. 59. Tel.	" 30	Agrees to omission of request for permission to put up telegraph line from Gallabat to Delgi, subject to concurrence of Cairo and Khartum ...	143
199 Lord Lloyd ... No. 160. Tel.	May 1	Refers to No. 197. Agrees to proposed procedure ...	144
200 Mr. Bentinck No. 65. Tel.	Apr. 29	Enquires about promises of personal payments to Ras Hailu and Ras Taffari ...	144
201 Mr. Bentinck No. 69. Tel.	May 4	Has handed memorandum and suggestions brought up to date to Ras Taffari, who promised to consider our proposals and give Mr. Bentinck his private opinion before showing them to the Empress ...	144
202 Mr. Bentinck No. 70a. Tel.	" 4	Ras Taffari is much pleased with promise of return Royal visit, and will tell the Empress ...	144
203 Mr. Bentinck No. 71. Tel.	" 4	Drafts as communicated to Ras Taffari will probably be further modified before being shown to the Empress ...	145
204 To Mr. Bentinck No. 62. Tel.	" 6	Approves communication to Ras Taffari of Mr. Bentinck's " suggestions " instead of Lord Lloyd's draft treaty. Considers that draft treaty in No. 194 ought to be used eventually as basis for discussions ...	145
205 Mr. Bentinck No. 78. Tel.	" 11	Owing to pressure of business connected with visit of Duke of Abruzzi, Ras Taffari says he will be unable to study documents until after 1st June ...	145
206 To Mr. Bentinck No. 70. Tel.	" 13	Sir C. Schuster has arrived in London with authority to deal with Tsana question on behalf of Sudan Government ...	145

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
207 Mr. MacMichael to Mr. Murray	1927 May 4	Transmits copy of letter from Consul Cheesman (Dangila) reporting rough survey of Blue Nile from Lake Tsana to Wanbera ...	146
208 Mr. MacMichael to Mr. Murray	" 7	Transmits copy of letter from Mr. McGregor to Sir G. Schuster. Flooded foreshores. Evaporation in reservoir much less than in river bed. Is not surprised that Consul Cheesman found river so low, explanation of which is simple and does not affect soundness of reservoir plan ...	148
209 Mr. Bentinck No. 89. Tel.	" 27	Asks whether to comply with Italian Minister's request to be shown memorandum and draft treaty given to Ras Taffari ...	149
210 Mr. Bentinck No. 90. Tel.	" 27	Refers to No. 209. Thinks it might be discourteous to Ras Taffari to comply with M. Cora's request ...	149
211 Mr. Bentinck No. 125. Very Conf.	" 2	Discusses question of personal remuneration to Empress, Ras Taffari, Ras Kassa and local chiefs in connection with granting of concession. Requests instructions ...	149
212 Mr. Bentinck No. 135	" 10	Transmits copies of memorandum and suggestions for treaty handed to Ras Taffari, and reports conversation with His Highness, who promised to communicate his observations before showing documents to the Empress ...	150
213 To Mr. Bentinck No. 76. Tel.	June 1	Refers to No. 210. Unless Ras Taffari is likely to be seriously annoyed, memorandum and suggestions for treaty ought to be communicated to Italian Minister ...	154
214 Mr. Bentinck No. 92. Tel.	May 31	Ras Kassa anticipates no great difficulty in negotiation of concession, except for delays and inevitable haggling ...	154
215 Mr. Bentinck No. 94. Tel.	June 2	Does not favour Consul Cheesman's suggestion that road to dam should be direct from Roseires and not from Gallabat to Delgi ...	154
216 Mr. Bentinck No. 96. Tel.	" 7	Refers to No. 213. Has given copy of memorandum and suggestions for treaty to Italian Minister. Suggests inviting German and Belgian Governments to instruct their representatives to adopt attitude of friendly neutrality ...	154
217 To Mr. Bentinck No. 80. Tel.	" 11	Refers to No. 215. Consul Cheesman's letter proposing alteration in route of road not yet received, but <i>prima facie</i> original suggestion seems probably the better ...	155
218 To Mr. Bentinck No. 81. Tel.	" 11	Refers to No. 212. Instructs to be chary of hints of personal remuneration and asks for detailed estimate by despatch ...	155
219 To Mr. Bentinck No. 82. Tel.	" 14	Refers to No. 216. In view of Belgian Minister's record, hesitates to drag him into negotiations. Proposes to say nothing either at Brussels or at Berlin ...	155
220 Mr. Bentinck No. 101. Tel.	" 18	Refers to No. 219. Both Belgian and German Ministers have already been consulted by Abyssinian Government. Inclines to view that some instructions from their Governments might be useful ...	155
221 To Mr. Bentinck No. 86. Tel.	" 24	Refers to No. 220. Informs that Belgian and German Governments have been invited to instruct their representatives, if occasion arises, to tell the Abyssinian Government that their Governments consider that concession would probably be to advantage of Abyssinia ...	156

No. and Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page.
222 To Mr. Bentinck No. 196	1927 June 25	Refers to No. 217. Transmits copy of letter from Sir G. Schuster regarding Consul Cheesman's suggestion for direct road from Roseires to dam. Still thinks Gallabat-Delgi road preferable, but alternative might be borne in mind during negotiations ...	150
223 Mr. Bentinck No. 160. Very Conf.	May 30	Refers to No. 214, and gives further details of conversation with Ras Kassa, who hinted that "third parties" ought to be kept out of negotiations if they are to be successful ...	158

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CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting Abyssinia.

PART VII.

CHAPTER I.—ARMS TRAFFIC.

[J 4/4/1]

No. 1.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 99.)

My Lord Marquess,

Foreign Office, January 10, 1927.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 2350 of the 9th ultimo and to subsequent semi-official correspondence regarding a proposed meeting to discuss the question of the arms traffic in Abyssinia, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a despatch* and of a telegram† on this subject from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.

2. From paragraph 3 of the despatch you will see that Mr. Bentinck is apprehensive that difficulties relating to the import of arms may react unfavourably on his efforts to obtain the Lake Tsana concession. I am anxious, as far as possible, to keep the various Abyssinian problems in water-tight compartments, and so to prevent considerations relating to arms, or the slave trade, from influencing our action in the matter of Lake Tsana, and *vice versa*. I hope that Mr. Bentinck may be able to persuade the Abyssinians to do the same, and to reach decisions on each question on its own merits. But naturally I do not wish to see Anglo-Abyssinian relations as a whole embittered by a dispute about the arms traffic, or any other particular issue. Without, therefore, allowing the question of Lake Tsana to become linked up with that of the arms traffic, I should like to be able to convey to Ras Tafari some reassuring statement about the latter, to the effect that His Majesty's Government at present are considering the practicability of arranging a meeting attended by representatives of the four interested Powers to define by agreement their several and joint obligations under the Geneva Arms Traffic Convention, and to suggest the ways and means of fulfilling these obligations. In making this statement, Mr. Bentinck would explain to His Highness that such an agreement would make the granting of permits within the limits prescribed by the convention a matter of routine, and should preclude the possibility of vexatious delays in granting permits or in delivery.

3. If such an announcement is to produce the effect which we desire, it must of course include a reference to Abyssinian representation at the meeting. It seems, however, that it was precisely on this point that M. de Saint-Quentin was most guarded in his comments. Unless you see objection, therefore, I suggest that a member of your staff might call at once on M. de Saint-Quentin and explain the position to him with the utmost frankness. M. de Saint-Quentin will appreciate that, while we have always regarded the proposed meeting as intrinsically desirable, we now have an additional reason for advocating it, seeing that the delay in settling the arms question seems not unlikely to jeopardise the Tsana negotiations. If he prefers it, the

* Part VI, No. 149.

† Addis Ababa telegram No. 163 of December 31, 1926 (not printed).

Abyssinian Government need not be told that the Quai d'Orsay has already been consulted. While His Majesty's Government desire to inform Ras Tafari of the project for the meeting with the least possible delay, they wish, of course, first to be sure that the French Government have no objection to their doing so.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 95/4/1]

No. 2.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 14.)

(No. 93.)

Sir,

Paris, January 13, 1927.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that, in accordance with the instructions contained in your despatch No. 99 of the 10th January regarding the proposed meeting to discuss the question of the arms traffic in Abyssinia, a member of my staff called on M. de Saint-Quentin on the 12th January.

2. The member of my staff enquired whether the answer of the French Government to the suggestions of His Majesty's Government might shortly be expected, explaining that you were now anxious lest the arms traffic question might exercise a prejudicial effect upon the forthcoming negotiations in regard to Lake Tsana, and that you were therefore doubly anxious that the French Government should fall in with your proposals. M. de Saint-Quentin replied that the answer of the French Government would be forwarded to His Majesty's Embassy very shortly. He stated that this answer would be to the effect that the French Government would be quite prepared to agree to the proposed conversations taking place between French, Italian and British representatives, though they were still not altogether clear as to the reasons which had prompted your suggestion. On the member of my staff enquiring whether he did not agree that it would be desirable that some representative of Abyssinia should attend the meeting, M. de Saint-Quentin stated that he did not see how this was practicable, as there were no Abyssinian representatives in Europe. The member of my staff, in accordance with your instructions, then suggested that perhaps M. Lagarde would be available to represent Abyssinia; but this suggestion was not welcomed by M. de Saint-Quentin, who remarked that M. Lagarde could not be considered as a properly qualified representative of the Abyssinian Government. M. Lagarde is by no means *persona grata* with M. Berthelot or other members of the Quai d'Orsay.

3. The member of my staff then explained that His Majesty's Government had been anxious, in order to facilitate the progress of the Lake Tsana negotiations, that Mr. Bentinck should be able to convey to Ras Tafari some statement on the lines indicated in paragraph 2 of your despatch under reference, and enquired of M. de Saint-Quentin what he thought of this idea. M. de Saint-Quentin at once answered that any such communication to the Abyssinian Government raised the question of Abyssinian representation at the meeting, which, as explained above, he did not consider practicable. He maintained this argument even when it was pointed out that the presence of an Abyssinian representative at the meeting would prevent the susceptibilities of the Abyssinian Government being hurt and would allow of useful mutual discussion of the exact meaning of the Arms Traffic Convention taking place between all parties.

4. M. de Saint-Quentin was then asked whether the French reply would, in fact, be to the effect that the French Government had no objection to a meeting taking place between French, Italian and British representatives, but that they did not consider Abyssinian representation at such a meeting practicable. To this M. de Saint-Quentin more or less assented.

5. In view of the attitude taken up by M. de Saint-Quentin, it would seem necessary to await the definite reply from the French Government, which is promised shortly, before any further action can be taken in the matter.

I have, &c.

CREWE.

[J 164/4/1]

No. 3.

Note by Mr. Ronald.—(Received in Foreign Office, January 21, 1927.)

M. DE ST. QUENTIN, who had with him M. Thierry, an expert on Abyssinia, was good enough to see Mr. Hoyer Millar and myself this afternoon to discuss the proposed meeting to consider the Abyssinian Arms Traffic problem.

I explained that I had come over because His Majesty's Government attached great importance to getting something settled and because we feared that there might have been a slight misunderstanding. The French Government were aware that His Majesty's Government for a long time had been gravely concerned by the dispersion of arms among unauthorised bodies and persons in Abyssinia, which resulted in anarchy in the border provinces, frontier raids, &c., into British territory. Again, there had been continuous friction with the Abyssinian Government in the matter of orders for arms, as hitherto it has always been impossible to determine whether orders are for the Central Government, and not merely for a party or faction. It seemed to His Majesty's Government that the time had come to take up a suggestion originally made by the French Government that the four interested Powers should act as if the Geneva Arms Traffic Convention were already in force. The projected meeting would consider this, and, if it were agreed to act henceforward as if the convention were in force, they would proceed to request Abyssinia to say what regulations she intended to make in pursuance of article 28, paragraph 1, by which she undertook to enforce certain measures enabling her to give effect to articles 12-18 (relating to special zones). The other three Powers would then consider whether the proposed Abyssinian regulations were calculated to ensure effect being given to these articles, and in accordance with article 28, paragraph 2, would proceed to consider with Abyssinia what measures they themselves were to enact to assist Abyssinia to render effective her own regulations. The discussions would show what form, &c., of orders, licences, &c., were to be recognised by the three limitrophe Powers as emanating from or being authorised by the Central Government; in other words, they would determine who was to be regarded as the Abyssinian Government within the meaning of articles 2 and 3. The meeting would also consider what machinery, if any, was necessary to ensure the working of the agreement come to and, if necessary, would decide whether any limit was to be placed on the quantity of arms to be imported in a given period.

M. de St. Quentin quite understood the necessity for Abyssinian participation at a meeting such as that suggested, but he was in some doubt as to how Abyssinian representation was to be managed in practice, as there were no accredited representatives of Abyssinia in France or in any other European country. I suggested that if Abyssinia could send representatives to attend meetings of the League, presumably she could easily find officials capable of acting on her behalf at a meeting to discuss the arms traffic. M. de St. Quentin asked whether we thought that the Abyssinian delegates to the League might represent their country at the suggested meeting, which would in that case not take place until the autumn. I replied that we were in no very great hurry, and though we naturally wanted to get the matter settled at the earliest opportunity, I imagined His Majesty's Government would, in case of necessity, be prepared to agree to the meeting taking place shortly before the Assembly, the Abyssinian delegates being asked to come to Europe for this purpose earlier than they would otherwise do. I went on to say that it ought to be easy to make the Abyssinians realise how much it was to their interest that a meeting of this sort should be held, seeing that if agreement were reached they would be able thenceforward to acquire with the least possible trouble and delay what arms they could reasonably want. In conclusion, I submitted that, as pointed out by M. Ponsot last year, it was no good trying to force any arrangements on Abyssinia, and the only way to ensure her acquiescence was to make her a party to the discussions from the start.

M. de St. Quentin suggested that perhaps the League of Nations might more properly do what the projected meeting was designed to do. I replied that our idea was that the meeting should first try to reach an agreement and only refer to the League if it failed to find a solution satisfactory to all four parties.

M. de St. Quentin was not sure whether Ras Tafari could not be regarded without further question as the Abyssinian Government. I answered that in fact he might be, but we wanted something more than His Highness's mere *ipse dixit* for purposes of import licences and orders for arms. For instance, His Highness was

in the habit of ordering arms for his bodyguard, which was distinct from the Abyssinian army, and we had nothing to show whether the Empress and Council concurred in these orders.

M. de St. Quentin asked whether the proposed meeting might not more conveniently be held at Addis Ababa. I said that we had suggested Paris for the convenience of the legal experts, who, as elaborators of the convention, were alone competent to judge whether its provisions were fulfilled.

M. de St. Quentin was not sure that the results of the meeting would preclude difficulties arising out of orders placed, say, in the United States of America. I suggested that we should have a strong case if we were in a position to show that a given order violated the provisions of the Arms Traffic Convention which the United States of America had signed. We could do this in the case of consignments to which we wished to take exception, as the agreement projected by His Majesty's Government merely implemented the Arms Traffic Convention. (It occurred to me, after leaving the Quai d'Orsay, that I should have suggested the communication of the results of the meeting both to the League of Nations and to all signatories of the convention; this should deprive of their substance any objections to action taken by us in pursuance of the recommendations of the meeting.)

M. de St. Quentin hoped that the Geneva Convention would soon be ratified by the necessary fourteen States. I remarked that His Majesty's Government were doing what they could to expedite the entry into force of the convention, as they had invited arms-producing States to ratify simultaneously, thus precluding the possibility of ratifying Powers being placed at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* those who had not ratified.

Finally, I urged M. de St. Quentin to do what he could to persuade his Government to accede to a request to which His Majesty's Government attached considerable importance. I offered to stay in Paris as long as M. de St. Quentin wished if he thought he needed me for further *éclaircissements*. M. de St. Quentin said he did not think it necessary to detain me, but promised to reconsider the whole question in the light of my explanations.

NIGEL RONALD.

British Embassy, Paris, January 20, 1927.

[J 175/175/1]

No. 4.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 24, 1927.)

(No. 261.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, December 31, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to report that on Christmas day three Abyssinian officials, for whom the Ras asked me to give diplomatic visas, left Addis Ababa by special train. These gentlemen were (1) Lij Makonnen Indalkatchou, controller of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway; (2) Ato Wolde Mariam Ayella, Government archivist; and (3) Ato Makonnen Hapte Wold, Director of the Ministry of Agriculture.

2. The last named is, I am told, proceeding to Egypt for the sake of his health, whereas the other two are going straight to Paris. Various reasons are assigned to this mission, but the French Minister believes its real object to be to see, before the money is paid, an equestrian statue recently ordered of the Emperor Menelik which is about to be shipped to Addis Ababa.

3. One of the reports reaching my colleagues and myself is that Lij Makonnen is really to be appointed Abyssinian diplomatic representative in Paris. Should this be true, my Italian colleague considers that it would be an unfriendly act towards England and Italy, especially coming as it would on the top of all the excitement aroused by the Anglo-Italian exchange of notes.

4. My French colleague tells me that some months ago he was told that the Abyssinian Government were considering the establishment of a permanent diplomatic mission in Paris. He told his informant that in that case they would also have to send a diplomatic mission to London and Rome which would be too expensive. He therefore recommended that if the Abyssinian Government wished to be represented in Europe, Geneva would be the best town to select for the purpose, as the diplomatic mission could easily proceed thence to Paris, London or Rome or to whichever other town in Europe in which their presence might be required.

5. Should further information reach me on the subject of this mission, I shall, of course, report it. I write what I have now heard in case His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris should be in a position to throw further light upon this subject.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 175/175/1]

No. 5.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 252.)

My Lord Marquess,

Foreign Office, January 27, 1927.

I TRANSMIT to you herewith a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa^a reporting the departure for France of an Abyssinian mission, news of which had been conveyed unofficially to this Department a fortnight ago by the counsellor of the Italian Embassy, who stated that his Government regarded with considerable suspicion the mystery with which the mission had been surrounded.

2. I shall be glad if your Lordship will furnish me with any information you are able to obtain regarding this mission's activities.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 216/4/1]

No. 6.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 29.)

(No. 242.)

Sir,

Paris, January 28, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 174 of the 21st January regarding the question of the arms traffic in Abyssinia, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of a letter which has been addressed to Mr. Phipps by M. de Saint-Quentin, the head of the "Afrique-Levant" Department at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in reply to the letter sent to him on the 18th December last, copies of which are also enclosed herein for convenience of reference.

2. You will observe that the French Government express their readiness to take part in a meeting between representatives of France, Italy, Great Britain and Abyssinia to discuss various questions arising out of the Arms Traffic Convention of 1925 and of the manner in which its provisions in regard to Abyssinia are to be applied both by the Abyssinian Government itself and by the three limitrophe Powers. You will note, however, that the French Government consider that it would be preferable that such a meeting should take place, not at Paris, as suggested by His Majesty's Government, but at Geneva, since, in the opinion of the French Government, the proposed conversations are more likely to prove agreeable to the Abyssinian Government if they take place under the auspices of the League of Nations. The French Government therefore suggest that the proposed meeting should be held at Geneva on the occasion of the next meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations, an arrangement which would facilitate the presence of properly qualified representatives of the Abyssinian Government.

3. It will not escape your notice that M. de Saint-Quentin takes the opportunity in his letter to renew the observations which he made during the course of his recent conversations with Mr. Ronald in regard to the desirability of His Majesty's Government proceeding as soon as possible to ratify the Arms Traffic Convention of 1925.

I have, &c.

CREWE.

Enclosure 1 in No. 6.

Mr. Phipps to M. de Saint-Quentin.

Mon cher Collègue et Ami,

Paris, December 18, 1926.

IN accordance with your request, I am writing to give you some details of the schemes put verbally to you on the 7th December by a member of the Embassy staff on the question of the import of arms into Abyssinia.

2. Our Government are in considerable doubt how to interpret those articles of the Arms Traffic Convention of 1925 which deal with Abyssinia. They feel that Abyssinia, France, Great Britain and Italy have all accepted obligations which are at once onerous and vague. They think that much trouble may be avoided in the future if the four interested Powers proceed at once to agree among themselves what they conceive these various obligations to mean and how they can help each other to give them effect. The Foreign Office think that the problem might be discussed—rather on the lines suggested by M. Ponsot some months ago—at a meeting in Paris where all parties could be conveniently represented and where the proceedings might in the first instance be entirely informal. At this meeting it should be possible to determine precisely what duties devolve severally and jointly on the four Governments from articles 2, 3 and 28 of the convention, and to make recommendations as to the machinery which it will be necessary to set up to enable them to discharge these obligations.

3. Until these points are settled to the satisfaction of all four Governments there is a danger that difficulties will arise not only between these Governments themselves, but also with other Governments with whom orders for arms may be placed. It goes without saying that our Government have not the smallest desire to do anything to prejudice Abyssinian independence or to add to the obligations which Abyssinia accepted in signing the convention in 1925.

4. We very much hope that the French Government will appreciate how important it is to reach a solution of this problem, and will fall in with the proposal for an informal meeting at Paris of the representatives of the four interested States.

Enclosure 2 in No. 6.

M. de Saint-Quentin to Mr. Phipps.

Mon cher Collègue,

Paris, le 25 janvier 1927.

VOUS avez bien voulu, par lettre du 18 décembre dernier, me faire connaître que le Foreign Office suggérerait une réunion officieuse entre représentants des Gouvernements britannique, français, italien et éthiopien, afin d'éclaircir, en ce qui concerne l'Éthiopie, le sens de certaines dispositions de la Convention de Genève du 17 juin 1925 sur le contrôle du commerce des armes.

La visite que Mr. Nigel Ronald m'a faite le 20 janvier a précisé quelles devraient être, d'après votre Ministère, la portée et la procédure de cet examen.

Le Gouvernement britannique est maintenant d'avis que l'Éthiopie, d'une part, et les trois Puissances limitrophes, d'autre part, devraient convenir d'appliquer, dans leurs relations réciproques, les dispositions de la convention de 1925 sans attendre la mise en vigueur de cet Acte. Il paraît désireux de voir établir à cet égard, pour l'importation des armes et des munitions en Éthiopie, des règles pratiques qui, tout en permettant au Gouvernement éthiopien de recevoir librement les armements nécessaires à sa sécurité, éviteraient pour l'avenir les difficultés qui se sont fréquemment élevées à ce sujet entre les Puissances limitrophes.

Je suis autorisé à vous faire savoir que nous partageons ces vues s'il s'agit bien, comme nous croyons le comprendre, non pas d'extraire de la convention de 1925 tel ou tel article à l'usage de l'Éthiopie, mais d'appliquer dans les relations de ce pays et les Puissances limitrophes toutes les dispositions de cet Acte, que nous considérons comme formant un tout indivisible.

Permettez-moi aussi, en vous exprimant notre assentiment, de vous indiquer notre très vif désir que l'accord à intervenir marque une étape, aussi proche que possible du but, vers la mise en vigueur de la convention de 1925. Je n'ai pas besoin de vous rappeler que le Gouvernement français s'est déclaré prêt, dès le mois de mai 1926, à déposer sa propre ratification, ainsi que le Gouvernement britannique en a été informé.

Nous croyons avec vous que, dans ces conditions et dans cet esprit, une réunion officieuse pourrait utilement se tenir entre représentants des quatre pays intéressés. Concernant le lieu de cette réunion, j'ai dit à Mr. Ronald que Genève paraîtrait préférable à Paris. Je ne puis que vous confirmer notre sentiment à cet égard. Préoccupés comme vous-mêmes de ne pas inquiéter le Gouvernement éthiopien, nous pensons qu'il accepterait plus volontiers de participer aux conversations projetées si elles devaient avoir lieu dans l'ambiance de la Société des Nations. D'autre part, comme il s'agit d'une discussion relative à un Acte conclu sous l'égide de la Société des Nations, il semblerait naturel que cette discussion se poursuivît au siège de cette institution.

Nous serions donc d'avis que les pourparlers eussent lieu à Genève sur les bases indiquées, à l'occasion de la prochaine assemblée de la Société des Nations. Cette circonstance ne pourrait, d'ailleurs, que faciliter la présence de délégués qualifiés du Gouvernement éthiopien, qui, vous le savez, n'a pas de représentants officiels permanents à l'étranger.

Veuillez, &c.

DOYNEL DE SAINT-QUENTIN.

[J 226/4/1]

No. 7.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 31.)

(No. 5.)

Addis Ababa, January 4, 1927.

Sir,

WITH reference to your despatch No. 364 of the 28th October last, which reached me on the 14th December, I have the honour to report that, soon after its receipt, Ras Tafari complained to Mr. Zaphiro that although he had asked Mr. Maclean long ago for a tank and some more arms, he had received no reply (see Mr. Maclean's despatch No. 203 of the 4th October). Mr. Zaphiro very properly replied that this was a matter concerning which he was not competent to speak, but that His Highness had better ask me about it. Accordingly at the private conversation recorded in the first paragraph of my despatch No. 4 of to-day's date Ras Tafari raised the question.

2. I explained to His Highness that the War Office held that there were no tanks suitable to his requirements, and that, in view of the altitude, they could not guarantee that tanks would be serviceable at Addis Ababa. To this His Highness replied that if they could not be used in this country that would not be the fault of the War Office. I replied that it would not be honest if the War Office were to supply him with unserviceable material which cost a great deal of money. His Highness held that the responsibility would be his, but he did not see why tanks should be affected by the altitude to a greater extent than motor cars.

3. I then referred to the difficulties of working tanks excepting by skilled hands. His Highness seemed surprised. He thought any chauffeur would be able to drive a tank. On my replying in the negative, he at once requested me to ask my Government to lend him an Indian instructor who could teach his people how to use a tank.

4. Subsequently His Highness sent me the enclosed note which I discussed with him further yesterday. I again laid stress on the fact that the War Office could not be responsible if, after he had paid £3,000 to £4,000, the tank could not be used. A tank weighed about 35 tons, and how, I asked, did he think one could be landed at Jibuti where there was no landing quay, especially as tanks could not be carried by ordinary steamers. I also enquired whether he had considered the difficulties of railway transport in view of the weight and size of a tank. His Highness said he would make enquiries both at Jibuti and of the manager of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway. He asked if the tank could not be taken to pieces and put together on arrival. Of this I was doubtful. His Highness begged me in any case to send to you his note (enclosed).

5. I told him that I understood that the latest whippet tank was not allowed by the Government to go to any foreign Power. His Highness begged me, nevertheless, to ask for it and, if he could not get this, perhaps the Government could let him have some other type. But he wanted a quite new one—not the second-hand one of which Mr. Maclean had spoken to him (see your telegram No. 93 of the 25th August, 1926). I suggested that he might alter the last sentence of his note enclosed so as to absolve His Majesty's Government from any responsibility if he could not have the newest type of tank and if another type were found on arrival not to be serviceable. His Highness said he would prefer to wait and see what you replied to his note.

6. In regard to the above, I venture to point out that Ras Tafari has set his heart upon a tank of sorts—preferably a new one with, I suppose, 3-inch Hotchkiss guns. In your telegram No. 93 of the 25th August two second-hand tanks were clearly offered to him as part of the consignment of rifles and uniforms for his bodyguard. If, in spite of all I have done to discourage him, he insists on a tank and absolves the War Office of all responsibility if the experiment should prove a failure, I do not well see how we can go back on our offer. On the contrary, I think that as the French and the Italians agreed to our supplying two of these, and as they were only omitted from the rest of the consignment as there was no time to send them, I feel we should be unwise in continuing to refuse. At this moment we are presumably about to reopen the Tsana negotiations, and it is to Ras Tafari that I look in the first place to push the negotiations to a successful conclusion. I consider, therefore, that we should be most unwise if we were to attempt to go back on a promise already given in regard to the tanks. I feel, sir, most strongly upon this point, and whatever our objections may be to the sale of a tank and the temporary loan of an Indian instructor, I consider that these objections are far outweighed by the advantages which we are likely to obtain from the whole-hearted goodwill and support of Ras Tafari in our forthcoming negotiations.

7. I may here mention that about a fortnight before the conversation with Ras Tafari recorded in paragraphs 1 to 3 above, I asked my French colleague how he viewed Ras Tafari's request for tanks. M. Gaussen held that they could not do us any harm. I explained the reluctance of the War Office to supply material which might prove unserviceable on arrival. M. Gaussen said he would feel the same if a tank were to be sent from France, especially as our industry and reputation might suffer if the tank were to prove a failure.

As we did not think any Abyssinian would be able to work it, we presumed that the next step on the part of Ras Tafari would be to apply for a foreign instructor. I asked M. Gaussen if he would feel the same objection to supplying a tank if an instructor were to come with it. This, M. Gaussen said, would be another matter, he did not commit himself to an expression of opinion.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 7.

Ras Tafari to Mr. Bentinck.

After greetings,

Addis Ababa (25th Tahas, 1919), January 3, 1927.

WITH reference to our conversation recently on the subject of the tanks which we decided to purchase from the British Government, as you very well know I asked for those which would suit the high altitude of the country. If it is now found troublesome to examine such tanks, I have to inform you that I would like to have tanks from the new invention which the British Government have ordered to be manufactured for their own use. These are to be selected for me by the Minister for War, upon whom I rely. One of the tanks should be armed with Maxim guns and the other with guns. The first to be despatched must be the one armed with guns.

2. If the tank has any sort of conveyance to be driven by it, this must be made so as to carry ammunition and provisions, and the tank must be complete with all the necessary machineries.

3. I would also like to have an Indian sent to me who is skilled with the mechanism of tanks in order to show the work to my men and then return back. The expenses of his passage to and from Abyssinia, including his expenses during his stay here, will be borne by me.

4. If the most powerful tank is selected among the new invention manufactured in England and is sent out here, and if after its arrival in this country loses some of its power on account of the high altitude of the country, there is nothing which will cause me regret.

(Seal of Ras Tafari.)

[J 228/4/1]

No. 8.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 31.)

(No. 12.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, January 8, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 5 of the 6th instant, I have the honour to report that in the first of the two unofficial conversations I had with Ras Tafari, recorded in that despatch, His Highness broached the question of arms. He had, he said, asked Mr. Maclean amongst other things for 500 rifles for his cavalry, but he was still without a reply (see Mr. Maclean's despatch No. 204 of the 11th October, 1926).

2. I then took the opportunity to explain at length to His Highness why His Majesty's Government were always "difficile" about the supply of arms to Abyssinia. We had in the first place our 1,700 miles of frontier to consider, and in the second place the increasing arming of countries was contrary to the world policy of His Majesty's Government and of the United States of America.

3. I said that whilst we had no wish to injure Abyssinian susceptibilities or to interfere with Abyssinia's sovereign rights, it was difficult for us to appreciate the need for increasing armaments at a moment when we were doing all we could to persuade the world to disarm. His Highness knew perfectly well that we did not intend to march over the frontier to attack Abyssinia, nor did we for a moment anticipate that he would order the Abyssinian army to try to march on Khartum or Nairobi! But, as he was well aware, armed bands outside of the control of the Central Government were continually violating our frontiers and killing our people. Between Canada and the United States of America we had an evermore extended frontier of some 3,000 miles without any fortifications, but there would be a pretty big row if bands from either country were to raid the frontiers of the other. His Highness could not accuse us of injuring Abyssinia's sovereign rights in discouraging armaments when in the Washington Conference we, the United States of America, Japan, France and Italy had all agreed to limit our naval armaments, but no one's sovereign rights had been injured. Having suffered as we all had in the great war and having seen how a continually arming Europe had inevitably exploded, we and the United States of America were now doing all we could to persuade the world to limit their armaments on land as we had succeeded in doing at sea.

4. His Highness appeared fully to appreciate my frank talk, but pointed out that even in England we had sufficient armaments for our needs. All he said he wanted was sufficient to maintain the authority of the Central Government. As I knew, he was utterly opposed to the raids over our frontiers, but, if the Central Government had not sufficient force, how could it control its frontiers?

5. I then read out to His Highness article 2 of the Geneva Convention of the 17th January, 1925, which, I observed, had so far as I knew only been ratified by France so that, strictly speaking, it was not yet applicable. His Highness said he would be quite ready to apply for all the arms he required "on behalf of the Abyssinian Government and with the authority of the Empress." The 500 rifles he wanted for his cavalry could come in the same consignment and he could take them out on arrival.

6. He then asked me to ask my Government how much they could let him have, without mentioning that he had asked for anything, as he did not want to ask and then be refused as had happened in the case of the anti-aircraft guns. I replied that I would tell my Government that he had approached me on the subject in a private and unofficial conversation, but that I could not possibly conceal from you the fact that he had mentioned the matter to me. That would not be honest. His Highness then begged me to enquire in the first instance what quantity of arms you thought you could let him have to enable the Central Government to maintain law and order in the country. He would like your private opinion in the matter, but did not wish any mention of his request to be made to the French and Italians.

7. After I had considered the matter and looked up the files, I asked for another unofficial talk with His Highness which, as already reported, took place on the 5th instant. I then told His Highness that we were trying to arrange with the French and Italian Governments for a settlement of the arms question for Abyssinia and no doubt Abyssinia would be given an opportunity of expressing an opinion on a matter which concerned her; that in view of what he had said to me a few days previously I had telegraphed urging that a speedy decision be reached. But, I said, if I were

[16460]

to ask you to give him private advice without consulting France and Italy, I was convinced that you would reply that you could not do so, but that you must first consult the other two Governments interested. I asked if he did not think it would be better that he should authorise you in the forthcoming conversations to tell the other two Governments of His Highness's request, or that His Highness himself should ask my two colleagues and myself to obtain the views of our three Governments for him. I said I was convinced that one or other of these courses would be preferable. Your policy I added was to be open and frank in your dealings with our friends—hence your success at Locarno. There was no reason for us to be reticent or to conceal things and I felt sure that you would never approve anything which might appear as though we were acting behind the backs of our friends. The previous consignment for his bodyguard which he had ordered in England must, I said, be considered exceptional. To this the French and Italians had agreed so that they must share in the credit. Although orders given in England were of course good for our industry, it was far from your thoughts to wish to gain the favour of the Abyssinian Government at the expense of our friends.

8. I then went on to explain to His Highness that before another order was considered, I felt sure we should require to have certain points made clear. If the arms he now wanted were for the Abyssinian army, in what relationship was I to say that his bodyguard stood to the army? We should, I added, also want to be clear upon the various points, which I quoted, raised in your despatch No. 382 of the 13th November. I explained again that our main cause for anxiety was our frontiers—hence our insistence that all rifles must have a distinguishing mark.

9. His Highness took all I said in a very sensible and friendly manner, appearing to appreciate my point of view. When I had finished he said that, in view of what I had said, he would himself address a note to the three Legations concerned asking the views of the three Governments. He would, for the moment, cancel the request he had made to Mr. Maclean, and see what we could do for him as a whole. He was convinced that he would be able to give satisfactory answers to all the questions I had put to him. He would perhaps eventually order, say, machine guns in one country, rifles in the other, and so on. I said I thought that this would be far the better policy and avoid all cause for jealousy amongst us.

10. I may here mention that in a recent hurried conversation with my Italian colleague about arms in general, he asked what we would say if, for instance, Ras Kassa were to apply for arms for the Central Government. I replied that I thought it would be difficult for us to refuse such a request if made with the Empress's seal and for the Government, but I questioned whether Her Majesty would be willing to lend her seal for the purpose. Should a case like that arise, and should Ras Kassa ask for the arms as successor, for instance, to the Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis, it seems to me that we should be justified in asking that the request should be made through or endorsed by Ras Tafari in his capacity as Regent and Minister for Foreign Affairs, as I imagine, for instance, we should in Greece require such a request eventually to come officially through the Minister for Foreign Affairs. M. Cora shared my views as to the need of the three Governments reaching an early settlement of this question in Europe, as he thought it highly undesirable that the onus of deciding on and perhaps refusing a request should be placed on the shoulders of one or other of the representatives of the three Powers at Addis Ababa—more especially as past experience had shown us that conversations of this kind could not be kept secret at Addis Ababa.

11. I cannot too strongly urge, Sir, the need of a speedy and harmonious settlement of this vexed question being reached between the four countries concerned and I am glad to note from your despatch No. 3256 to Paris of the 23rd November last that you are already fully alive to the dangers of further delay and procrastination. I think in this connection it must be clearly understood that, so long as Ras Tafari occupies the position of Regent and Heir to the Throne, and so long as he is entitled to speak in the name of the Empress, we cannot be accused of favouring one faction in the country against the other if we accede to request made by him in his official capacity. An order placed by Ras Tafari, with the Empress's seal, cannot possibly be considered as in the same category as one placed "by some other Abyssinian leader." Such an order as this should be refused without hesitation seeing that we wish, whilst safeguarding our own interest, to help Abyssinia and not to hinder her in the maintenance of her sovereign rights.

12. It is perhaps worth while considering in our conversations with Paris and Rome whether we cannot revert to the old scheme suggested in the time of

Mr. Thesiger, but never, I believe, put into practice, whereby if we should agree to supply new rifles, the Abyssinian Government be called on to return to us an equal number of old rifles so as to prevent the Abyssinian soldiers selling these to the frontier tribes.

I have, &c.
C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 244/175/1]

No. 9.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 1.)

(No. 267.)

Paris, January 31, 1927.

Sir,
WITH reference to your despatch No. 252 of the 27th instant, I have the honour to acquaint you that Mr. Phipps happened to meet M. Berthelot at luncheon yesterday in the country, and remarked to him that he had seen in the press that an Abyssinian Mission had recently arrived in France.

2. M. Berthelot replied that the Abyssinians referred to had merely come to this country with a view to the possible purchase of arms; their presence in France had no political object whatever.

I have, &c.
CREWE.

[J 244/175/1]

No. 10.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 5.)

Foreign Office, February 3, 1927.

(Telegraphic.)
YOUR despatch No. 261 of the 31st December: Abyssinian mission to France. French Government state that mission has no political object, but has come with view to possible purchase of arms. If this be so, it looks as though only purchase on large scale could account for its despatch.

Above information may be of use to you in your conversations with Ras Tafari by showing him that the story has come out despite his secretiveness. If he wants our help he must practise as well as profess frankness.

No. 11.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(Nos. 7 and 8.)

Foreign Office, February 7, 1927.

(Telegraphic.)
(R.) YOUR despatch No. 12 of the 8th January: Arms traffic in Abyssinia. I approve the language which you held to Ras Tafari.

As French Government have now agreed in principle to proposed four-Power meeting, you should communicate to his Highness, in continuation of conversation reported in paragraph 7 of your despatch under reference, suggested terms of reference contained in my immediately following telegram, substance of which is being communicated to French and Italian Governments.

You should make it clear to him that our object is to establish within framework of Geneva Convention some permanent and automatic machinery which will not only facilitate the acquisition by the Central Government of the arms legitimately required for the defence of the country and the maintenance of order, but will prevent unauthorised imports and obviate delay and friction, which are inevitable under present conditions. If Abyssinia wants arms, the sooner this automatic machinery is established the better for her.

You should suggest that orders now contemplated should stand over until after the meeting which His Majesty's Government wished to take place at Paris as soon as possible, a point of view to which they still strongly adhere. The French Government suggest that as the meeting is the natural outcome of and complementary to the Geneva Arms Traffic Convention, which was elaborated under the auspices of the

League, Geneva would be preferable to Paris, thus emphasising connection between meeting and the League, to whom, as well as to other signatories of convention, any agreement reached by the meeting would be communicated. French Government urge that Geneva would also be convenient in that Abyssinian delegation to the League could represent their country at the arms meeting and thus avoid the necessity of sending two delegations. Under French proposal, meeting would presumably take place either just before or after Assembly, preferably former. Please urge Abyssinian Government to agree to the meeting and invite their views as to its place and date. Italian Government are being sent similar invitation.

The meeting, at which all four Powers would of course be on footing of equality, would be as informal as possible, but we suggest that representation should be by one secretary assisted by a legal adviser, presence of latter being necessitated by legal questions involved in interpreting an international convention. (End of R.)

French Government do not wish M. Lagarde to act as Abyssinian delegate. If you like you may tentatively suggest that M. Bellefonds or M. Auberson should act as legal adviser, and an Abyssinian delegate to the League might suitably represent Abyssinia.

No. 12.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 9.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, February 17, 1927.

MY telegrams Nos. 7 and 8: Arms traffic in Abyssinia.

Suggested terms of reference would raise questions of—

1. Immediate application of Geneva Arms Traffic Convention to Abyssinia.
2. What Abyssinian regulations are in force or contemplated to give effect to paragraph 1, article 28, Geneva Convention; what authority is to be regarded as Abyssinian Government under articles 2 and 3, &c.; what import licences, &c., are to be recognised.
3. Whether these regulations enable Abyssinia to carry out articles 12 to 18.
4. What British, French and Italian regulations are necessary in accordance with paragraph 2, article 28, to render effective Abyssinian regulations.
5. Whether these regulations satisfy Abyssinia.
6. What machinery, if any, must be established to work regulations.

To these perhaps might be added—

- (a.) Consideration of fixed ratio of armament requirements of Abyssinia during given period in proportion to the strength of the armed forces she maintains.
- (b.) How orders are to be distributed among producing States.
- (c.) Provision of foreign instructors.

As regards (c), at present I am disposed to feel that instructors should never be French, Italian or British.

[J 285/4/1]

No. 13.

Foreign Office to Board of Trade.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 7, 1927.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to state that for some time he has been considering the practicability of holding an informal meeting, attended by representatives of Abyssinia, France, Great Britain and Italy, to determine the best means of controlling the arms traffic in North-East Africa.

2. In order to preclude the need for another agreement when the Geneva Arms Traffic Convention comes into force, Sir Austen Chamberlain has suggested to the Governments of Abyssinia, France and Italy that they should consider the propriety of acting henceforward as if that convention were already in force in so far as Abyssinia was concerned. Having decided this, the four Powers would agree among themselves

what local regulations were necessary to enable each and all to give effect to the provisions of the convention.

3. The French Government have already agreed in principle that such a meeting is desirable, but answers have not yet been received from the Abyssinian or Italian Governments. For the information of the Board I am to enclose herein a copy of a telegram to His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa outlining the suggested terms of reference of the meeting.

4. But before committing himself Sir Austen Chamberlain would be grateful for an assurance that the Board would see no objection to the immediate application of the Geneva Convention to Abyssinia. He does not anticipate that the practical effect of this or of any agreement reached by the meeting will make it necessary to alter any of the arms export regulations now enforced by your Department.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 285/4/1]

No. 14.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 337.)

My Lord Marquess,

Foreign Office, February 7, 1927.

YOUR despatch No. 242 of the 28th ultimo on the subject of the Abyssinian arms traffic reached me the same day as the two despatches, of which I enclose copies,† from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa drawing attention to Ras Taffari's desire once more to increase the armament of his bodyguard. I have informed Mr. Bentinck of the French Government's concurrence in the proposal that representatives of the Powers chiefly concerned should discuss the problem together, and I have suggested that Ras Taffari's desire for arms may act as an inducement to the Abyssinian Government to agree to an early meeting.

2. I enclose copies of my two telegrams‡ to Mr. Bentinck and of my instructions§ to His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome, and I shall be glad if your Lordship will acquaint the French Government with the action taken and with the suggested terms of reference for the meeting. At the same time I would wish my thanks to be conveyed to them for their concurrence in the suggestion for a meeting. I note that in their view Geneva would be more convenient than Paris, and I have informed the Italian and Abyssinian Governments of this suggestion and of the reasons which prompted the French Government to put it forward.

3. When I receive replies from the Abyssinian and Italian Governments I shall inform you of their purport for communication to the French Government.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 285/4/1]

No. 15.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 174.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 7, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 97 of the 21st ultimo, I have to inform your Excellency that a member of this Department proceeded a fortnight ago to Paris to explain verbally to the Quai d'Orsay what His Majesty's Government had in mind when they suggested an informal meeting to discuss the importation of arms into Abyssinia. A record of the conversation at the Quai d'Orsay is enclosed,¶ from His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, from which you will see that the French Government are disposed to agree that some such meeting is desirable.

2. I have now received the despatch, of which a copy is enclosed,¶ from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa has drawn attention in the two despatches, of which copies are enclosed,† to Ras Taffari's desire once more to increase the armament of his bodyguard.

4. It is possible that Ras Taffari's desire for arms may enable Mr. Bentinck to induce the Abyssinian Government to agree to an early meeting by which to settle

* No. 12.

† Nos. 7 and 8.
‡ No. 3.§ Nos. 11 and 12.
¶ No. 6.

§ No. 15.

once for all the wearisome question of Abyssinian arms traffic. I have, accordingly, addressed two telegrams to Mr. Bentinck,* of which I annex copies, instructing him to urge the Abyssinian Government to agree to the meeting.

5. I shall be glad if you will now approach the Italian Government officially (although they already are in possession of most of the facts from unofficial correspondence with M. Rosso, of which you have received copies) and acquaint them with the action taken and with the suggested terms of reference for the meeting. You should urge them to agree to the proposed meeting and invite their views as regards place and date. For my part, I still think that the meeting should be held at Paris as soon as possible, as it should not be difficult for the Abyssinian Government to arrange for their representation, but if that Government share the French Government's view that Geneva would be more convenient, I shall be prepared to fall in with their wishes.

6. When the Abyssinian reply is received, I shall communicate its purport to your Excellency for the information of the Italian Government.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 397/4/1]

No. 16.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 18.)

(No. 12.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, February 17, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 7.

I told Ras Tafari substance unofficially yesterday, but I did not feel able to invite him definitely to be represented at proposed meeting, as both my colleagues are without instructions or information. Should not invitation to Abyssinian Government be made by all three of us? If meeting planned for May Abyssinian Government will require timely notification.

[J 392/4/1]

No. 17.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 18.)

(No. 13.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, February 17, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 8.

My colleagues and I feel it would be a mistake for us to suggest any names.

Question of representation should, we consider, be left entirely to Abyssinian Government. In any case, we do not consider Swiss judge now here suitable for the purpose.

No. 18.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 18.)

(No. 14.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, February 17, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 9.

Questions raised should be, I think, answered by my two colleagues and myself after consultation together. Both are without information, and, unless instructed by his Government, French Minister does not feel able to express any opinion. Could you not ask Paris and Rome to ask the views of their representatives here upon the points raised?

* Nos. 11 and 12.

No. 19.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 13.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, February 18, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 14 of 17th February: Arms traffic in Abyssinia.

My telegram No. 9 set out actual terms of reference suggested. These took the form of questions which will have to be considered and can only be answered by proposed meeting. Telegram might have been clearer if words "would raise questions of" in opening sentence had been omitted.

[J 397/4/1]

No. 20.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 14.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, February 19, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 12 of 17th February: Arms traffic in Abyssinia.

I appreciate your anxiety to preserve united front and act loyally by your colleagues, but you were only instructed to urge the Abyssinian Government to agree in principle to meeting of the type proposed: it is premature to talk of invitations. Moreover, Italian Government have not yet agreed, though I hope shortly to persuade them. Unilateral *démarche* by us as initiators of plan accords with normal procedure and incidentally should prevent Abyssinian Government imagining that they were being coerced, as they might do if faced with joint representations. Our idea is to treat them on footing of equality from the start.

[J 430/4/1]

No. 21.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 21.)

(No. 131.)

HIS Majesty's representative at Rome presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a *note verbale* to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, dated the 15th February, 1927, respecting the proposed meeting to discuss Abyssinian arms traffic.

Rome, February 16, 1927.

Enclosure in No. 21.

Note verbale.

THE Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs have no doubt been kept informed by the Royal Embassy in London of the discussions which have recently been taking place with the object of arranging an informal meeting between representatives of Italy, France, Abyssinia and Great Britain, with a view to deciding various questions arising out of the Arms Traffic Convention of 1925 and of the manner in which its provisions in regard to Abyssinia are to be applied, both by the Abyssinian Government itself and by the three limitrophe Powers.

2. His Britannic Majesty's Embassy have now the honour, under instructions, to inform the Royal Ministry that His Britannic Majesty's Government learn that the French Government are disposed to agree that some such meeting is desirable.

3. Meanwhile, Ras Tafari has once more expressed the desire to increase the armament of his bodyguard. It appeared, therefore, to His Britannic Majesty's Government that this was a favourable moment to urge the Abyssinian Government to agree to an early meeting, as suggested, by which to settle once for all the question of the Abyssinian arms traffic. Instructions have therefore recently been sent to His Britannic Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa to endeavour to induce the Abyssinian Government to agree to a meeting, and to make it clear that the object was to establish within the framework of the Geneva Convention some permanent

and automatic machinery which would facilitate the acquisition by the Central Government of the arms legitimately required for the defence of the country and the maintenance of order, and would prevent unauthorised imports, and obviate delay which is inevitable under the present conditions.

4. His Britannic Majesty's Government would further suggest that the terms of reference of the meeting should raise the following questions:—

- (1.) The immediate application of the Geneva Arms Traffic Convention to Abyssinia.
- (2.) What Abyssinian regulations are in force or contemplated to give effect to paragraph 1, article 28, of the Geneva Convention; what authority is to be regarded as the Abyssinian Government under articles 2 and 3, &c.; what import licences, &c., are to be recognised?
- (3.) Whether these regulations enable Abyssinia to carry out articles 12 to 18.
- (4.) What British, French and Italian regulations are necessary in accordance with paragraph 2, article 28, to render effective the Abyssinian regulations?
- (5.) Whether these regulations satisfy Abyssinia.
- (6.) What machinery, if any, must be established to work the regulations?

To these perhaps might be added:—

- (a.) Consideration of a fixed ratio of the armament requirements of Abyssinia during a given period in proportion to the strength of the armed forces she maintains.
- (b.) How orders are to be distributed among producing States.
- (c.) Provision of foreign instructors.

5. His Britannic Majesty's Embassy are further instructed to express the earnest hope that the Royal Government will also be disposed to agree to the proposed meeting, and would be grateful for their views as regards its place and date. In the opinion of His Britannic Majesty's Government the meeting should be held at Paris as soon as possible, as it should not be difficult for the Abyssinian Government to arrange for their representation in that capital. The French Government suggest, however, that, as the meeting is the outcome of and complementary to the Geneva Arms Traffic Convention, which was elaborated under the auspices of the League, Geneva would be preferable to Paris. His Britannic Majesty's Government would be prepared to fall in with this suggestion if the Royal Government share the French Government's view that Geneva would be more convenient.

6. The meeting, at which all four Powers would of course be on a footing of equality, should, it is thought, be of a completely informal character, and His Britannic Majesty's Government suggest that each Power should be represented by one secretary, assisted by a legal adviser, whose presence would be necessitated by the legal questions involved in interpreting an international convention.

7. His Britannic Majesty's Embassy would be grateful if they could be informed as soon as may be possible of the views of the Royal Government on the above proposals.

Rome, February 15, 1927.

[J 448/4/1]

No. 22.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 23.)

(No. 17.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, February 22, 1927.

YOUR telegrams Nos. 7, 9 and 14.

If it was your intention that I should merely ascertain whether Ras Tafari would agree in principle to Four-Power Conference, impression at my last conversation was that he would welcome invitation and would prefer to send a mission from Abyssinia *ad hoc* rather than to make use of mission now in Paris.

If, on the other hand, your intention was that I should also communicate to Ras Tafari contents of your telegram No. 9, I am personally of opinion that it would be inadvisable to do so until all three Governments are agreed. Furthermore,

I consider it is for the three Powers to decide what we propose to consider as the Abyssinian Government and not to put this question to Abyssinians at conference. I also deprecate any mention by us at conference of foreign instructors. This could be considered if and when raised by Abyssinian Government (see my despatch No. 80 of 15th July, 1925).

[J 448/4/1]

No. 23.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 19.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, February 24, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 17 of the 22nd February: Arms traffic in Abyssinia. French and Italian Governments had already been informed that in approaching Ras Tafari on subject of proposed meeting, you would tell him of suggested terms of reference. Unless this is done and unless he understands exactly what the meeting is for, his agreement in principle to its taking place cannot be worth much.

As regards points raised in second paragraph of your telegram under reference, it appears to us to be for the Abyssinian Government to define to the satisfaction of the other three parties what person or authority has power to sign orders or import licences in their name, that is, who is to be regarded by the three limitrophe Powers as the Central Government within the meaning of the convention.

Mention of foreign instructors in terms of reference was inserted in the hope that it might be possible to induce France, Great Britain and Italy to agree not to allow their white subjects to act as instructors, and at the same time to obtain undertaking from Abyssinia only to employ nationals of small non-arms-exporting States, e.g., Switzerland and Sweden in this capacity. Danger against which we hoped to guard was in fact very similar to that referred to in your despatch No. 80 of 15th July, 1925.

But French Government in expressing concurrence with proposed terms of reference have urged omission of paragraphs (b) and (c) of my telegram No. 9 of 7th February. You should not therefore mention them to Ras Tafari.

[J 451/4/1]

No. 24.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 24.)

(No. 476.)

HIS Majesty's representative at Paris presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit, with reference to Foreign Office despatch No. 460 of the 18th February, 1927, copy of a note from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, dated the 22nd February, 1927, respecting the importation of arms into Abyssinia.

Paris, February 23, 1927.

Enclosure in No. 24.

French Government to British Embassy (Paris).

LE Ministère des Affaires étrangères a l'honneur d'accuser réception à l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne de sa note du 10 février relative au projet de réunion officielle de représentants des Gouvernements britannique, français, italien et éthiopien en vue de discuter la question de l'importation des armes en Abyssinie.

Le Ministère des Affaires étrangères a pris note de ce que le Ministre de Sa Majesté britannique à Addis-Ababa a reçu l'instruction de donner connaissance au Prince Régent des conversations qui ont eu lieu à ce sujet, et des points sur lesquels pourrait porter la discussion.

Le Ministère des Affaires étrangères a l'honneur de faire savoir à l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne que, d'une manière générale, le Gouvernement de la République est d'accord avec le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté sur l'énumération des questions qui pourront figurer à l'ordre du jour de la réunion dont il s'agit. Toutefois, en ce qui concerne la manière dont les commandes seront distribuées parmi les Etats

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producteurs d'armes, et l'envoi éventuel d'instructeurs étrangers en Ethiopie, le Gouvernement de la République, tout en ayant le plus grand désir de s'entendre avec le Gouvernement britannique et le Gouvernement italien sur ces deux questions, ne pense pas qu'elles soient susceptibles d'être traitées au cours d'une discussion qui a spécialement pour objet l'application des dispositions de la Convention de Genève de 1925.

D'autre part, il est dit dans la note du 10 février que Mr. Bentinck suggérera que toutes les commandes d'armes envisagées actuellement par le Prince Régent soient suspendues jusqu'à la conclusion de la réunion projetée. Le Ministère des Affaires étrangères a l'honneur de faire savoir à l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne que le Gouvernement français se réserve, en tout cas, la faculté de faire au Gouvernement éthiopien une fourniture de matériel de guerre de valeur équivalente à celles qui ont été récemment acceptées par les Gouvernements britannique et italien, et au sujet desquelles il n'a soulevé aucune objection.

Paris, le 22 février 1927.

[J 451/4/1]

No. 25.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 21.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, February 26, 1927.

MY telegram No. 19 of 24th February: Arms traffic in Abyssinia.

Italian Government have now unofficially agreed to meeting, but, like the French, they wish to exclude discussion of foreign instructors. They strongly favour Paris.

If you can get Ras Tafari to agree to Paris, the French Government will probably drop the Geneva suggestion. Connection with League will be sufficiently emphasised by communication to it of results of meeting, as to other signatories of convention.

[J 451/4/1]

No. 26.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 276. Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 28, 1927.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 52 of the 23rd instant I transmit to your Excellency herewith a copy of a despatch* from His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris forwarding a note in which the French Government express their general agreement with my proposals for the informal meeting to discuss the Abyssinian arms traffic question. In deference to the wishes of the French Government on the 24th February I telegraphed to His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa, who had not yet acted on the instructions contained in my telegrams Nos. 7, 8 and 9, to refrain from saying anything to Ras Tafari about consideration by the meeting of the distribution of orders among producing States, and the provision of foreign instructors.

2. Meanwhile the counsellor of the Italian Embassy called at this Department on the 25th instant, and, on instructions from Rome, stated that the Italian Government still adhered to the view that there should be a preliminary three-Power meeting to ensure an "united front." He was told that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government this was a counsel of perfection, as Italy and Great Britain wanted, and would always want, to limit to a minimum the quantity of arms imported into Abyssinia; while France wished, and would always wish, to ensure the continued prosperity of her colony of Jibuti by permitting its staple industry, the arms traffic, to flourish in so far as international conventions permitted. One could only hope for an united front on the surface, and the Italian Government's object would be achieved if agreement were reached on the question of procedure, i.e., the proposed meeting and its suggested terms of reference. M. Rosso agreed and said that he would explain this to his Government.

3. The Italian Government still felt that Paris would be preferable to Geneva as a meeting place. I have, therefore, addressed a telegram,† of which a copy is enclosed, to Mr. Bentinck instructing him to endeavour to induce Ras Tafari to agree to Paris. If His Highness does, the French argument in favour of Geneva will fail, as it was based on the assumption that the Abyssinians would prefer that

* No. 24.

† No. 25.

place to Paris. M. Rosso went on to explain that in the view of his Government the real difficulty throughout the meeting would be with the French and not with the Abyssinians; French opposition could be more easily countered in Paris than in Geneva, where the French delegates would continually cause delay by referring back to Paris for instructions.

4. The Italian Government agreed generally with the suggested terms of reference, but they objected to the inclusion of the subject of foreign instructors. M. Rosso was informed that the French Government had taken a similar view, and that Mr. Bentinck had been instructed not to mention the point in speaking to Ras Tafari. It was explained to M. Rosso that the subject had been suggested for discussion as the meeting seemed likely to offer an opportunity, which might not occur again, for the three Powers to enter into some sort of self-denying ordinance, whereby they bound themselves to refrain from lending white instructors to Abyssinia, and to secure an undertaking from Abyssinia only to employ nationals of small non-arms-producing States if she required European instructors. M. Rosso promised to inform his Government of this as he thought they might perhaps be willing to allow their delegates at the meeting to discuss some such suggestion.

5. M. Rosso was instructed to obtain the views of His Majesty's Government on the above points, after which his Government would reply officially to the note which your Excellency addressed to them on the 15th instant. At the end of the conversation he agreed to repeat to his Government that His Majesty's Government felt strongly that the sooner the meeting was held the better.

6. I am forwarding a copy of this despatch to Paris, but will not instruct Lord Crewe to communicate the views of the Italian Government to the Quai d'Orsay until I receive the official Italian reply which will no doubt reach you in the course of next week.

7. As regards the last paragraph of the French note, I propose to instruct His Lordship merely to say that His Majesty's Government have taken note that the French Government reserve to themselves the right to authorise the export to Abyssinia of material of value equal to that of the consignments recently shipped by Great Britain and Italy. I shall be glad if you will inform the Italian Government accordingly.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 451/4/1]

No. 27.

Mr. Ronald to Mr. Millar (Paris).

(Confidential.)

Dear Hoyer Millar,

Foreign Office, February 28, 1927.

WE were relieved to learn from your despatch No. 476 of the 23rd instant that the French Government agreed generally with our proposals for the meeting to discuss the Abyssinian arms traffic problem.

We instructed Bentinck on the 24th February, who had not yet acted on our earlier instructions, to refrain from mentioning the distribution of orders among arms producing States, and the provision of foreign instructors, in communicating the suggested terms of reference to Ras Tafari.

Meanwhile, we have heard from M. Rosso that the Italian Government are disposed generally to agree with our proposals, and we have addressed a despatch to Sir R. Graham, of which I enclose a copy herein.*

In order that the French Government may not think that anything in the course of the negotiations is being concealed from them, we think that, if a suitable opportunity offers, you might tell them verbally and unofficially that we are much gratified by their concurrence in our scheme and that we are well on the way to securing Abyssinian and Italian consent to the meeting. We will let them know immediately we get the official replies from both these Governments. But meanwhile, in deference to their wishes, we have instructed Bentinck to say nothing to Ras Tafari about the distribution of orders or the provision of instructors.

As regards the rather shameless reservation contained in the last paragraph of the Quai d'Orsay's note, we feel that all we are required to do is to "take note."

Yours ever,

NIGEL RONALD.

* No. 26.

[J 537/4/1]

No. 28.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 5.)

(No. 24.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, March 3, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 14.

French Minister, having at last received instructions, mentioned the proposed four-Power meeting to Ras Tafari 28th February. Ras Tafari has now made to both of us a counter-proposal that the meeting take place at Addis Ababa, as he wishes to conduct negotiations himself.

My Italian colleague and I adhere to the view expressed in my despatch No. 12, paragraph 10, that it might be embarrassing for the Ministers to raise objections to any arms being imported. I shall therefore suggest Geneva as a compromise. In recommending place of previous Arms Convention and League meetings, we should be on stronger ground in urging this as against Addis Ababa. Italian Minister is telegraphing his views also to Rome in this sense. French Minister thought arms meeting was to take place in March; Ras Tafari therefore said to me that mission now in Paris could not act and there would not be time to send another delegation. I said that obviously March was out of the question. French Minister does not think that Ras Tafari would trust anyone to represent him, and Ras Tafari states as much to me.

Is meeting only planned for just before General Assembly in September? My telegram No. 12.

[J 536/4/1]

No. 29.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 5.)

(No. 50.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Rome, March 5, 1927.

YOUR despatch No. 276.

I understand from Ministry for Foreign Affairs that they will be willing to take part in meeting respecting arms traffic provided it is held in Paris.

[J 564/4/1]

No. 30.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 7.)

(No. 177.)

Sir,

Rome, March 4, 1927.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 276 of the 28th ultimo respecting the proposed meeting to discuss the question of the Abyssinian arms traffic, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of a *note verbale* which I have addressed to the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as instructed in the last paragraph of that despatch.

I also enclose copy of an *aide-mémoire* which, together with a verbal explanation in the sense of your telegram No. 52 of the 23rd ultimo, has been communicated to the competent department of the Ministry.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM.

Enclosure 1 in No. 30.

Note verbale.

HIS Britannic Majesty's Embassy, in their *note verbale* No. 58 of the 15th ultimo, had the honour to communicate to the Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs the proposals of His Britannic Majesty's Government for a meeting for a discussion of questions arising in connection with the supply of arms to Abyssinia.

The British Embassy have now received instructions to inform the Royal Ministry that the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in a recent communication on the subject of the proposed meeting, stated that the French Government reserved to themselves

the right to authorise the export to Abyssinia of material of value equal to that of the consignments recently shipped by Italy and Great Britain. The Foreign Office propose to instruct His Britannic Majesty's Embassy in Paris, in replying to the French note, merely to say that His Britannic Majesty's Government have taken note of the views of the French Government on this point.

Rome, March 4, 1927.

Enclosure 2 in No. 30.

Aide-mémoire.

IN their *note verbale* No. 58 of the 15th February the Embassy had the honour to communicate to the Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs the proposals of His Britannic Majesty's Government for an informal meeting between representatives of Italy, France, Abyssinia and Great Britain for the purpose of discussing the question of the arms traffic in Abyssinia. It was added that the French Government were disposed to agree to the proposal, and the hope was expressed that the Italian Government would do likewise.

His Britannic Majesty's Government have given careful consideration to the points raised in this connection by the Italian Embassy in London, and the British Embassy have been instructed to communicate to the Royal Ministry the following further observations on the reasons which have led them to regard the course indicated in the Embassy's note of the 15th instant as providing the most suitable means of approaching the question:—

1. The informal conversations which have taken place between members of the Foreign Office, the Quai d'Orsay and the Italian Embassy in London were designed as a substitute for the preliminary three-Power meeting which had been suggested—a common policy being determined in this way rather than round a conference table.
2. The participation of Abyssinia from the start seemed to the British Government the only means of ensuring Abyssinian consent to any lasting and satisfactory agreement; and without Abyssinian consent no agreement could be of any real value.
3. The stress laid on the connection of the meeting and its objects with the Geneva Convention, and therefore with the League, appeared to His Britannic Majesty's Government to afford the only means of securing French co-operation. From the explanations given by the Italian Embassy in London, it would seem that the Royal Government would, for their part, prefer the conclusion of a tripartite agreement which, by coming into force before the Geneva Convention, would retain its validity thereafter. His Britannic Majesty's Government are, however, convinced that the French Government would certainly not agree to such a course.
4. A four-Power meeting, and the conclusion of an agreement within the framework of, and communicable to, all signatories of the Geneva Convention, seems to His Majesty's Government to offer the sole means of meeting the difficulty of Abyssinian orders for arms placed with outside Powers, such as the United States of America, Germany and Belgium.
5. At the type of meeting proposed there could be rediscussed all those solutions of the problem which have been discarded in the past, e.g., transit permits, a fixed ratio of arms to be imported in a given period, the handing over of old arms on the importation of new ones, all of which might be considered as potential parts of the machinery required to give effect to the Geneva Convention.

The British Embassy are further instructed to express the earnest hope of His Britannic Majesty's Government that, in view of this further explanation of the reasons which have actuated the British Government in formulating their present proposals, the Royal Government will find it possible favourably to consider the scheme set forth in the Embassy's *note verbale* No. 58 of the 15th instant.

Rome, February 28, 1927.

[J 663/4/1]

No. 31.

Memorandum communicated by the Italian Embassy, March 10, 1927.

(Translation.)

THE Italian Embassy have been authorised to declare formally to the Foreign Office that the Italian Government, abandoning their original suggestion for a preliminary meeting between the representatives of Great Britain, France and Italy without the presence of the Abyssinian representative, are prepared to concur in the procedure and programme proposed by the British Government for the discussion of the question of the importation of arms into Abyssinia, and accordingly agree that the said discussion should be based on the presumption that the Geneva Convention has already entered into force.

The Italian Government, however, insist on the desirability of the conversations taking place at Paris, and the Italian Minister at Addis Ababa has received instructions to approach Ras Tafari, in concert with his British colleague, with a view to the Abyssinian Government declaring themselves in favour of the choice of Paris as the venue of the proposed discussions.

The Italian Government have noted the declarations made by Mr. Ronald to M. Rosso to the effect that the British Government relinquish their proposal to include in the programme of the discussions the point relative to the military instructors for the Abyssinian army.

Italian Embassy, London, March 10, 1927.

[J 537/4/1]

No. 32.

Sir W. Tyrrell (for the Secretary of State) to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 27.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, March 10, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 24 of 3rd March: Arms traffic.

His Majesty's Government and Italian Government would both like meeting to take place as soon as possible, though March has never been mentioned in this connection. Both Governments would prefer Paris, but if this is impossible Geneva appears to be best alternative. It was French suggestion that meeting should be held just before Assembly in September, but in our view and that of Italian Government this involves unnecessary and undesirable delay.

[J 607/4/1]

No. 33.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 11.)

(No. 26. Confidential.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, March 10, 1927.

MY despatch No. 24.

Ras Tafari told me French Minister had agreed with him as to place. French Minister denies this and says that he gave non-committal reply and refrained also from expressing any opinion in his telegram to Paris. French Minister professed to agree with me that conversations had better be held in Europe, but he would not authorise me to tell you that these were his private views.

My Italian colleague believes French Minister is working against us on this question.

[J 677/4/1]

No. 34.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 60.)

(Telegraphic.)

Rome, March 18, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 27 to Addis Ababa.

The impression I have received from Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs is that their consent to take part in conversations respecting arms traffic is conditional upon meetings being held in Paris, and that they would probably refuse to go to Geneva (see my telegram No. 50 and my despatch No. 191).

[J 663/4/1]

No. 35.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 788.)

My Lord Marquess,

Foreign Office, March 21, 1927.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 476 of the 23rd ultimo, I transmit to your Lordship herewith a copy of a note^o from the Italian Embassy agreeing generally with my proposal for a meeting to discuss the question of the importation of arms into Abyssinia. Your Lordship will notice, however, that the Italian Government are still most anxious that the conversations shall take place at Paris rather than at Geneva.

2. I shall be glad if you will inform the French Government accordingly. You might at the same time inform them that Ras Tafari has suggested that the meeting should take place at Addis Ababa, where he could conduct the negotiations himself. Mr. Bentinck and his Italian colleague are endeavouring to persuade him to withdraw this suggestion, informing him at the same time that both the British and Italian Governments favour Paris, but if this is not acceptable, Geneva would appear to be the best alternative. In any case the meeting should be held as soon as circumstances will permit.

3. In conclusion, you should inform the French Government that His Majesty's Government have taken note of the reservation made in the last paragraph of the Quai d'Orsay's note of the 22nd ultimo, and you should add that the cost of the British consignment of arms for Abyssinia last year, including packing, freight and insurance, amounted to £10,191 17s., of which £5,290 was for arms and £2,253 for ammunition.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 688/4/1]

No. 36.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 21.)

(No. 210.)

HIS Majesty's representative at Rome presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note verbale from the Italian Government, dated the 12th March, 1927, respecting a forthcoming meeting regarding war material for Abyssinia and French and Italian reservations as to respective quotas.

Rome, March 16, 1927.

Enclosure in No. 36.

Note verbale.

(Translation.)

THE Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs have the honour to thank His Britannic Majesty's Embassy for having courteously communicated to them the declaration made by the Quai d'Orsay, to the effect that the Government of the Republic reserve to themselves the right to authorise the exportation to Abyssinia of war material to an

amount equal to that of the supplies recently sent by Great Britain and Italy to the Ethiopian Government.

The Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs have the honour to inform His Britannic Majesty's Embassy that no communication on the subject has reached the Royal Government from the French Government; however, while seeing no objection to His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador at Paris being instructed to confine himself to taking note of this declaration, the Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs cannot refrain from observing that an equal right of sending arms to Abyssinia must necessarily be maintained by Italy to the same extent as claimed by France, and that such declarations in advance will certainly not serve to facilitate the conversations which are expected to take place shortly in Paris on the system of supplying arms to Abyssinia.

Rome, March 12, 1927.

[J 713/4/1]

No. 37.

Board of Trade to Foreign Office.—(Received March 23.)

Sir,

Board of Trade, March 22, 1927.

WITH reference to your letter of the 7th February regarding the proposed application of the Arms Traffic Convention to Abyssinia, I am directed by the Board of Trade to state that they would see no objection to the immediate application of this convention to Abyssinia, subject to the following observations.

As the Secretary of State is aware, the Arms Export Prohibition Order, 1921, which gives the Board of Trade power to restrict the export of arms and ammunition except under licence, does not cover the whole of the material in Categories I to V of the Arms Traffic Convention, and the Board have no power under the existing Orders in Council to control the export of bayonets, swords, lances, aircraft and aircraft engines, fire-control and gun-sighting appliances and certain explosives, such as gelignite, dynamite, detonators, blasting gelatine, &c. It would, of course, be possible to add the articles to the Order in Council, but it would then be necessary to adopt the somewhat cumbrous procedure of issuing an open general licence in the case of all countries other than Abyssinia. As the items in question are relatively unimportant, and as the Secretary of State does not anticipate that it will be necessary to alter any of the regulations now in force, the Board assume that the Secretary of State will not desire that the Arms Export Prohibition Order of 1921 should be amended in this respect.

The Arms Traffic Convention provides that a licence or document must accompany the arms on their journey to their destination. This procedure is not now adopted, but it would doubtless be possible to arrange for the procedure to be adopted in the case of Abyssinia. The Board venture to observe, however, that it is very undesirable (if it can possibly be avoided) to have special regulations applying to a single and (from the standpoint of exporters in the United Kingdom) unimportant country. There is always a danger that the regulation may be overlooked.

A more serious difficulty is the obligation under the convention of publishing elaborate statistical data as to imports and exports. As the Secretary of State will be aware, at the time when the convention was under negotiation His Majesty's Government took the view that these data were needlessly elaborate, although they did not at the time press their objections to the point of refusing to sign the convention. In all the circumstances the Board would be reluctant to agree to the publication of such statistics in the case of Abyssinia alone, not only on the ground that the question is not of sufficient importance, but also because it might be used as a precedent for pressing His Majesty's Government to publish similar data for other countries. If, of course, the convention should come into force it would be necessary to do this, but the Board understand that there is no prospect of the convention being ratified in the immediate future, if at all. If, however, the Foreign Office regard it as essential, on political grounds, that the data should be published, the Board would not be prepared to press their objections in the matter, but they consider that due weight should be given to them at the proposed informal conference.

The Board would be glad to be consulted as to the terms of any agreement relating to Abyssinia, so far as it may affect matters which come within the province of the Board of Trade.

I am, &c.

H. FOUNTAIN.

[J 688/4/1]

No. 38.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 865.)

My Lord Marquess,

Foreign Office, March 26, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 788 of the 21st instant regarding the Abyssinian arms traffic, I transmit to your Lordship herewith a copy of a further despatch on this subject from His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome,* and shall be glad if you will inform the French Government of its contents.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 794/4/1]

No. 39.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 2.)

(No. 39.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, April 1, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 27.

Ras Tafari again expressed hope that meeting might take place here, but if this was impossible he would assent to delegation to Europe, and it would make no difference to him whether Paris or Geneva were chosen. He does not want to wait until Geneva Assembly meeting, but asked if meeting could not be held in June.

Ras Tafari has studied memorandum I gave him with terms of reference suggested in your telegram No. 9 as subsequently modified. He will let me have his views when delegation is ready to start.

[J 794/4/1]

No. 40.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Phipps (Paris).

(No. 950.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 4, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 823 of the 24th ultimo, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa, from which it appears that the Abyssinian Government are indifferent as to whether the proposed meeting to discuss the arms question should take place at Paris or at Geneva, but that they are anxious it should be held at an early date.

2. I shall be glad if you will at once bring this to the notice of the French Government and invite them to agree that the delegations should meet, say, on the 8th, 9th or 10th June at Paris. You should add that His Majesty's Government presume the French Government will now no longer hesitate to agree to Paris as the meeting place, as Geneva was only suggested in the first place as being perhaps more acceptable to the Abyssinian Government and as both His Majesty's Government and the Italian Government have expressed a strong preference in favour of the former place.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 794/4/1]

No. 41.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 451.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 4, 1927.

WITH reference to your Excellency's telegram No. 60 of the 18th ultimo, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa, from which it appears that the Abyssinian Government are indifferent as to whether the proposed meeting should take place at Paris or at Geneva, but that they are anxious it should be held at an early date.

* No. 36.

[16460]

2. I shall be glad if you will inform the Italian Government accordingly, adding that I have instructed Mr. Phipps to invite the French Government to agree to the meeting being held in Paris. You should at the same time request their views as to the convenience of the 8th, 9th or 10th June as dates for the first meeting.

3. I enclose copies of my despatch* to Mr. Phipps and of a telegram† which I have addressed to Mr. Bentinck.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 713/4/1]

No. 42.

Foreign Office to Board of Trade.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 5, 1927.

WITH reference to your letter of the 22nd ultimo regarding the proposed application to Abyssinia of the Geneva Arms Traffic Convention, 1925, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to state that he has taken note of the difficulties which would have to be overcome if the new convention were to be adopted exceptionally in the case of Abyssinia. The points raised in your letter will be borne in mind if and when the projected meeting takes place and the possible difficulties brought to the notice of the other Governments, who may, of course, be in a similar predicament.

2. On the other hand, Sir Austen Chamberlain attaches importance to the subjects with which the meeting will have to deal, and if it appears that the application of the convention constitutes the only prospect of satisfactorily regulating the traffic in arms, he will have to request the Board to take those exceptional measures which may be necessary to enable His Majesty's Government to fulfil their obligations under the convention as defined by the meeting.

3. It would be convenient if the officials attending the meeting on behalf of His Majesty's Government could be supplied with a rough draft, or at any rate the substance, of the regulations which the Board of Trade would have to issue if the Geneva Convention were in force as regards Abyssinia, and I am to request that, if possible, the Secretary of State may be furnished with a statement on these lines.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 794/4/1]

No. 43.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa.)

(No. 43.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, April 5, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 39 of the 1st April: Arms traffic in Abyssinia.

Please inform the Government to which you are accredited that I am asking French and Italian Governments to agree to first meeting being held at Paris on 8th, 9th or 10th June.

[J 877/4/1]

No. 44.

Mr. Phipps to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 8.)

(No. 837.)

Sir,

Paris, April 7, 1927.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 950 of the 4th April regarding the proposed meeting to discuss the question of the import of arms into Abyssinia, I have the honour to inform you that a member of His Majesty's Embassy saw M. de St. Quentin on the 6th April and handed him a memorandum, copies of which are enclosed herein, giving the substance of the Abyssinian Government's reply and urging the French Government to agree to the meeting taking place in Paris early in June.

* No. 40.

† No. 43.

2. M. de St. Quentin made no comments on the suggestions contained in this memorandum beyond stating that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was awaiting a telegram from the French Minister at Addis Ababa reporting the views of the Abyssinian Government in this connection. As soon as this telegram was received a reply would be sent to His Majesty's Embassy.

I have, &c.

ERIC PHIPPS.

Enclosure in No. 44.

Memorandum from British Embassy, Paris, to French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

HIS Majesty's Embassy presents its compliments to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and, with reference to its memorandum No. 273 of the 31st March regarding the proposed informal meeting to discuss the question of the import of arms into Abyssinia, has the honour, under instructions from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to state that from a report received from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa, it would appear that the Abyssinian Government is indifferent as to whether the suggested meeting should take place at Paris or at Geneva. The Ras Tafari is, however, anxious that the meeting should be held at an early date, and has enquired whether it could not take place in June, stating that he did not wish to wait until the meeting of the Assembly of the League of Nations at Geneva next September.

In bringing this information to the notice of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, His Majesty's Embassy is directed to express the hope that the Government of the Republic will be prepared to agree that the delegations to this informal meeting should meet at Paris on, say, the 8th, 9th or 10th June next. His Majesty's Government presume that the Government of the Republic will now no longer hesitate to agree to Paris as the meeting place, since Geneva was only suggested in the first place as being perhaps more acceptable to the Abyssinian Government, and since both the Italian Government and His Majesty's Government have expressed a strong preference in favour of Paris.

April 5, 1927.

[J 877/4/1]

No. 45.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa.)

(No. 49.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, April 11, 1927.

MY telegram No. 43 of the 5th April: Arms traffic in Abyssinia.

French Government state unofficially that they cannot comment on our suggestions for date and meeting place until they receive report from your French colleague. Please do what you can to ensure that he reports Ras Tafari's wishes in same sense as your telegram No. 39 of 1st April, without suggesting any Abyssinian aversion to Paris as venue.

[J 915/4/1]

No. 46.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 11.)

(No. 44.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, April 9, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 43.

Abyssinian Government will send representatives.

[J 931/4/1]

No. 47.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 14.)

(No. 50.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, April 13, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 49.

I had told French Minister gist of my telegram No. 39, and he had reported matter by despatch. French Government have now telegraphed to him to obtain confirmation himself from Ras Tafari, which he will endeavour to do and tell me the result.

[J 904/4/1]

No. 48.

*Foreign Office to War Office.**

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 14, 1927.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to request you to inform the Army Council that it is hoped that an informal meeting will be held at Paris early in June, attended by representatives of Abyssinia, France, Great Britain and Italy, to discuss the question of the importation of arms into Abyssinia.

2. In the course of this meeting it is proposed to ask the Abyssinian Government to furnish statistics of the permanent armed forces which they control and maintain. These figures will presumably cover the Abyssinian army proper, bodyguards and personal retinues, reserves and police. Some indication of the quantity of arms necessary for forces of the strength to be stated might possibly be obtained if France, Great Britain and Italy were to communicate to the meeting the ratio which they maintain of arms and ammunition to men in the various branches of their armed forces, the average of these ratios being utilised to assess a reasonable ratio for Abyssinia. I am accordingly to invite the Army Council to be good enough to state what ratio of arms and ammunition to men is usually maintained for infantry (rifles and Lewis guns), machine-gun corps, cavalry (rifles and Hotchkiss guns), field artillery and garrison artillery and for reserves of all these services.

3. The Home Office are being asked to furnish statistics in respect of the Royal Ulster Constabulary as a guide for the assessment of the ratio for police.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 1076/4/1]

No. 49.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 30.)

(No. 990.)

Sir,

Paris, April 28, 1927.

WITH a view to carrying out the instructions contained in your telegram No. 110 of the 27th April, a member of my staff called to-day on M. de St. Quentin and enquired whether the Ministry for Foreign Affairs would shortly be in a position to reply to the suggestions made by His Majesty's Embassy in its memorandum of the 5th instant regarding the date and place of the proposed informal meeting to discuss the question of the importation of arms into Abyssinia.

2. In reply, M. de St. Quentin stated that the French Government, in view of the considerations advanced by His Majesty's Embassy, was prepared to agree to the meeting taking place in Paris early in June, and did not intend to maintain its point of view regarding the desirability of Geneva as the place of the meeting. M. de St. Quentin explained that he was speaking unofficially, but that an official note in the same sense would be addressed to His Majesty's Embassy in the course of the next few days.

I have, &c.

CREWE.

* Also sent to Home Office, *mutatis mutandis*.

[J 1076/4/1]

No. 50.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 58.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, April 30, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 63 of 28th April: Arms traffic in Abyssinia.

French Government state unofficially that their official agreement to first meeting in Paris on 6th June will shortly be sent. Please inform Ras Tafari and do what you can to ensure that Abyssinian delegates arrive in time and with fullest instructions.

[J 1076/4/1]

No. 51.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 575.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 2, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 555 of the 28th ultimo, regarding the arms traffic in Abyssinia, I transmit to your Excellency herewith a copy of a despatch* on this subject from His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, and I shall be glad if you will inform the Italian Government that the French Government hope to be able shortly to agree to the first meeting being held in Paris early in June. I hope therefore that discussions can be started on the 8th as suggested in my despatch No. 451.

2. I enclose a copy of a telegram† which I have addressed to His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 1102/4/1]

No. 52.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 3.)

(No. 324.)

Sir,

Rome, April 27, 1927.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 451 of the 4th instant, respecting the proposed meeting at Paris for the discussion of the question of the supply of arms to Abyssinia, I have the honour to report that the Italian Government were duly informed of the suggestion of His Majesty's Government that the meetings should begin on the 8th, 9th or 10th June.

2. No reply has yet been received from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and, as it seemed possible that delay might be caused by the departure of Commandatore Guariglia for Addis Ababa (see my despatch No. 326 of the 27th instant), I caused verbal enquiries to be made at the Ministry. Signor Tuozi, the official in charge of the Department, expressed his regret that he was not yet in a position to reply, but explained that it was necessary to consult the Ministry of the Colonies at every step. He thought, however—though he could not yet say anything definite—that the Ministry would probably suggest some date about the 24th June for the meeting.

3. I will endeavour to elicit a definite statement of the views of the Italian Government on this point as soon as possible, but, as Commandatore Guariglia will not be back in Rome until early in June, and as he has been so closely concerned in all the negotiations, I think that a short postponement of the date will probably be suggested.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM.

* No. 49.

† No. 50.

No. 53.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 143.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, May 3, 1927.

YOUR despatch No. 324 of the 27th April: Arms traffic in Abyssinia.

Please inform the Government to which you are accredited that postponement would place His Majesty's Government in great difficulty, as none of their legal advisers will be available until October unless discussions open on 8th June. Counsellor at Italian Embassy has also promised to telegraph this to his Government.

[J 1161/4/1]

No. 54.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 5.)

(No. 67A.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, May 4, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 58.

Ras Tafari informed, but, after seeing memorandum embodying Egyptian department's letter to Chancery of 6th April, he expressed the fear that it might not be possible for necessary instructions to be ready in time for Abyssinian delegation. He will let me know definitely shortly. I pointed out that we had suggested June on purpose to please him.

[J 1167/4/1]

No. 55.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 6.)

(No. 1033.)

HIS Majesty's representative at Paris presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note from the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs, dated the 4th May, 1927, respecting arms traffic in Abyssinia.

Paris, May 5, 1927.

Enclosure in No. 55.

French Ministry for Foreign Affairs to British Embassy, Paris.

SE référant à son mémorandum du 31 mars 1927, l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne à Paris a bien voulu exprimer au Ministère des Affaires étrangères, par sa note du 3 avril dernier, le désir de son Gouvernement de voir intervenir les 8, 9 ou 10 juin prochain, à Paris, la réunion officieuse de représentants des Gouvernements britannique, français, italien et éthiopien, en vue de discuter la question de l'importation des armes en Éthiopie.

Le Gouvernement éthiopien ayant accepté indifféremment Paris ou Genève comme siège de cette réunion si elle ne pouvait intervenir à Addis-Ababa, le Ministère des Affaires étrangères a l'honneur de faire savoir à l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne que le choix de Paris et la date des 8, 9 ou 10 juin prochain pour les entretiens dont il s'agit ne soulèvent aucune objection de la part du Gouvernement français.

Paris, le 4 mai 1927.

No. 56.

[J 1206/4/1]

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 9.)

(No. 356.)

Sir,

Rome, May 6, 1927.

ON receipt of your telegram No. 143 of the 3rd instant respecting the date of the Paris Conference respecting the supply of arms to Abyssinia, representations were at once made to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs with a view to impressing upon them the difficulties of any postponement.

2. As reported in my telegram No. 110 of the 5th instant, Signor Tuozi, the official in charge of the department, stated that the Ministry had learned from the Italian Embassy in Paris that the 14th June was the latest date which would be practicable for His Majesty's Government for the opening of the discussions. Both the Italian experts dealing with the matter, Commendatore Guariglia and Signor De Ciutiis, were at present in Abyssinia with the Duke of the Abruzzi's Mission. They are not expected to return to Rome until early in June, and the Ministry consequently thought that the 14th June was the earliest date which it would in practice be feasible for them to accept. It has not yet been decided who shall act as the Italian representatives in Paris.

3. Signor Tuozi added that steps were being taken to prepare the Italian case for Paris and, in particular, to examine the questions presented to them by this Embassy in accordance with the letters from the Egyptian Department of the 9th and 11th ultimo. The Italian authorities were, however, not very hopeful as regards the probable results of the conference. They considered that the interests of the various Powers were too far apart and, while they had acquiesced in the view of His Majesty's Government that it was not possible to reach a preliminary agreement between the three European Governments concerned, they thought it would be found extremely difficult to reconcile these conflicting views in a conference between the four parties. They intended, however, to do their best to assist in reaching some satisfactory solution.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM.

No. 57.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 10.)

(No. 113.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Rome, May 10, 1927.

MY telegram No. 112.

Italian Government agree to 8th June for beginning of conference.

[J 1221/4/1]

No. 58.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 68.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, May 11, 1927.

MY telegram No. 64 of 7th May: Arms traffic in Abyssinia.

Italian Government have now agreed to meeting on 8th June. Please telegraph urgently if Abyssinian delegates can arrive in time; if not, will they be available during the last ten days of July, failing which meeting will have to be postponed till beginning of October.

[J 1253/4/1]

No. 59.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 79.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, May 11, 1927.

MY telegram No. 67 [sic] and my immediately preceding telegram.

For the same reason Ras Tafari has been unable to study arms question and begs that conference be postponed until just before or just after League of Nations meeting in September. I am informing my colleagues.

[J 1227/4/1]

No. 60.

Home Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 11.)

Sir,

Home Office, May 10, 1927.

IN compliance with the request contained in your letter of the 14th ultimo, I am directed by Secretary Sir William Joynson-Hicks to transmit herewith copy of a communication received from the Government of Northern Ireland giving particulars as to the authorised scale of issue of ammunition to the Royal Ulster Constabulary, for the information of an informal meeting of representatives of Abyssinia, France, Great Britain and Italy, to be held in June, for the purpose of discussing the importation of arms into Abyssinia.

I am, &c.

C. M. MARTIN-JONES.

Enclosure in No. 60.

Government of Northern Ireland to Home Office.

Sir,

May 5, 1927.

WITH reference to Mr. Martin-Jones's letter of the 21st ultimo in regard to the question of the importation of arms into Abyssinia, I am directed by the Government of Northern Ireland to state that the following is the authorised scale of issue of ammunition to the Royal Ulster Constabulary:—

- 1 rifle and 200 rounds of .303 ammunition,
- 1 revolver and 100 rounds of .455 ammunition to each man.

I am to add that reserve stocks of both rifles and ammunition are held at the central police stores, but no definite scale for reserves has yet been laid down.

I am, &c.

C. H. BLACKMORE.

[J 1253/4/1]

No. 61.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 71.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, May 16, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 79: Arms traffic meeting.

Meeting was arranged for June at considerable inconvenience in order to meet Ras Tafari's wishes, cf. your telegram No. 39 of 1st April, in which you reported that he had already studied suggested terms of reference. It has been so difficult to arrange the meeting at all that I am reluctant to abandon 8th June unless you are satisfied that it would be physically impossible for Abyssinian representatives to reach Paris by then. In this case there would be nothing for it but to postpone meeting until October.

[J 1230/4/1]

No. 62.

Foreign Office to War Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 16, 1927.

I AM directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to request you to inform the Army Council that during the official visit which he is paying to Abyssinia, His Royal Highness the Duke of Abruzzi intends to present to Ras Tafari a 5-ton tank as a gift from His Majesty the King of Italy. It appears from the enclosed telegram from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa* that this tank and apparently the first of a separate consignment of Italian armoured cars have now arrived accompanied by two Italian soldiers as temporary instructors.

2. It will be remembered that some months ago it was suggested that the provision of foreign instructors should be included on the agenda of a projected four-Power meeting to discuss the control of the Abyssinian arms traffic. The idea underlying this suggestion was that it might have proved possible to reach an agreement that foreign instructors for the Abyssinian army should never be French, Italian or British. In your letter of the 16th March it was stated that in the opinion of the Army Council such a proposal had its merits, and they were accordingly prepared to accept it provided that no risk was involved of instructors being obtained from Soviet Russia. Subsequently both the French and Italian Governments expressed the opinion that it would be better to refrain from raising the question at the proposed meeting.

3. The matter is therefore for the moment in suspense, but it is conceivable that, Italian instructors having once been lent and their services found useful, others may later be asked for by the Abyssinian Government. I am to enquire how the Army Council would view such a contingency, and whether they would wish the matter referred to at the meeting, which it is hoped will open its sittings at Paris on the 8th June.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 1316/4/1]

No. 63.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 19.)

(No. 85.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, May 18, 1927.

YOUR telegrams Nos. 68 and 71 (see my telegram No. 67).

Foreign Secretary repeats that necessary instructions cannot possibly be issued in time for Abyssinian representatives to arrive even by the end of July. Meeting must therefore be postponed until October.

Italian Royal visit has paralysed all business.

[J 1316/4/1]

No. 64.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).†

(No. 131.)

(Telegraphic.)

[By Bag.]

Foreign Office, May 19, 1927.

MY immediately preceding telegram, repeating Addis Ababa No. 85 (by bag).

You should inform the Government to which you are accredited and express regret of His Majesty's Government that owing to this circumstance over which they have no control postponement seems inevitable.

* Not printed.

† Also to Sir R. Graham (Rome), No. 160 (R.), *mutatis mutandis*.

[J 1343/4/1]

No. 65.

War Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 23.)

Sir,

War Office, May 21, 1927.

I AM commanded by the Army Council to reply to your letter, dated the 14th April, 1927, as to the amount of arms and ammunition maintained in war and expended in peace in units of our army, to be used as a basis in assessing a similar ratio for Abyssinia. The schedules enclosed herewith show:—

- (A.) The number of weapons and amount of ammunition carried with the unit and in the mobile field echelons for a cavalry regiment, a battery of artillery (light and field) and a battalion of infantry at war establishment.
 (B.) Weapons maintained and ammunition expended by the same units at home peace establishment during a normal year's training.
 (C.) As for (B), as regards the equivalent territorial army units.

It will be noticed that the scale of ammunition expended annually by units in (B) is very much higher than the corresponding units in (C), and in this connection it is considered that the status of the Abyssinian army more nearly corresponds to the latter.

I am, &c.

A. E. WIDDOWS.

Enclosure in No. 65.

(A 1.)

CAVALRY REGIMENT at War Establishment.

Establishment (Other Ranks).	Rifles.		Hotchkiss Guns.	Vickers Machine Guns.	Small-arm Ammunition.			Remarks.
	Number on Charge.	Number on which Scale of S.A.A. is calculated.			With Unit.	In S.A.A. Section of Cavalry Divisional Train.	In M.T. Company.	
656	562	450	2 A.A.	12	For each rifle } 200* For each Hotchkiss A.A. gun } 900 For each Vickers gun } 12,000	Nil .. 3,000	90 .. 3,000	* 90 on soldier, 110 in regimental reserve. The amount of rifle S.A.A. carried in 1st line transport and M.T. company is calculated on 450 rifles.

Increase of Vickers guns from 8 to 12, and withdrawal of Hotchkiss guns (except 2 for A.A.), has only recently been sanctioned. Review of scales of S.A.A. will be necessary, but it is unlikely that they will be materially changed.

(A 2.)

BATTERY OF ARTILLERY at War Establishment.

	Establishment (Other Ranks).	Guns.	Ammunition.		
			With Unit.	In D.A.C.	In M.T. Company.
Light battery, R.A...	202	4—3·7-in. howitzer 2 Hotchkiss ..	Rounds per gun. 114 1,200	Rounds per gun. 90 ..	Rounds per gun. 66 ..
Field battery, R.A.— 18-pr.	144	4—18-pr. .. 2 Lewis	176 1,128	124 ..	100 ..
4·5-in.	154	4—4·5-in. howitzer 2 Lewis	132 1,128	168 ..	100 ..

(A 3.)

BATTALION OF INFANTRY at War Establishment.

Establishment (Other Ranks).	Rifles.		Number of Lewis Guns.	Number of Vickers Guns.	Small-arm Ammunition.			Remarks.
	Number on Charge.	Number on which S.A.A. is calculated.			With Unit.	In S.A.A. Section of Divisional Train.	In M.T. Company.	
856	770	700	32 ground 2 A.A.	12	For each rifle } 150* For each Lewis ground gun } 2,812 For each Lewis A.A. gun } 470 For each Vickers gun } 8,000	75 1,290 .. 24,000	55 1,898 .. 12,000	* Men of rifle section carry 70 rounds; this is increased to 120 rounds on going into action. Lewis gunners and certain other personnel carry 50 rounds. 80 rounds per rifle for 700 rifles carried in 1st line transport vehicles.

Note.—Increase of Vickers guns from 8 to 12 has only recently been sanctioned. Review of scale of S.A.A. will be necessary, but it is unlikely that it will be materially changed.

(B 1.)

CAVALRY REGIMENT at Peace Establishment.

Establishment (Other Ranks).	Number of Rifles on Charge.	Number of Hotchkiss Guns.	Number of Vickers Guns.	Annual Allowance of Ammunition.	
				For Rifles.	For Vickers Guns.
458	419	2 A.A.	8	Rounds. 525 for each man in regiment except members of M.G. squadron, who are allowed 245 only	Rounds. Average 990 for each member of a M.G. squadron.

[16460]

F 2

(B 2.)

BATTERY OF ARTILLERY at Peace Establishment.

	Establishment (Other Ranks).	Number of Guns.	Annual Allowance of Ammunition: Gun.
Light battery: 3·7-in. ..	134	4	Rounds per battery. 300
Field battery—			
18-pr.	112	4	480
4·5-in. howitzer ..	112	4	320

(B 3.)

BATTALION OF INFANTRY at Peace Establishment.

Establishment (Other Ranks).	Number of Rifles on Charge.	Number of Lewis Guns.	Number of Vickers Guns.	Annual Allowance of S.A.A.	
				For Rifles and Lewis Guns.	For Vickers Guns.
763	648	32 ground 2 A.A.	12	Rounds. 525 for each man in battalion, ex- cept members of M.G. team who are allowed 245 rounds only for rifle practice	Rounds. 940 for each member of a M.G. team.

(C 1.)

YEOMANRY REGIMENT at Peace Establishment.

Establishment (Other Ranks).	Number of Rifles.	Number of Vickers Guns.	Annual Allowance of Ammunition.	
			For Rifles.	For Vickers Guns.
274	233 when unit is up to establishment, other- wise actual strength plus 5 per cent. spare	2	Rounds. 70 for each man	Rounds. 530 for each member of M.G. platoon.

(C 2.)

TERRITORIAL ARTILLERY at Peace Establishment.

	Establishment (Other Ranks).	Number of Guns.	Annual Allowance: Gun Ammunition.
Light battery: 3·7-in. howitzer	128	4	Rounds per battery. 200
Field battery—			
18-pr.	101	4	200
4·5-in. howitzer ..	101	4	140

(C 3.)

TERRITORIAL INFANTRY BATTALION at Peace Establishment.

Establish- ment (Other Ranks).	Number of Rifles.	Number of Lewis Guns.	Number of Vickers Guns.	Annual Allowance of Ammunition.		
				For Rifles.	For Lewis Guns.	For Vickers Guns.
636	636 when unit is up to establishment, otherwise actual strength plus 5 per cent. spare	32 ground 2 A.A.	4	Rounds. 70 for each man in battalion, ex- cept members of Lewis gun teams 55 for each mem- ber of Lewis gun teams	Rounds. 100 for each member of Lewis gun team	Rounds. 530 for each member of M.G. platoon.

[J 1427/4/1]

No. 66.

War Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 30.)

Sir,

War Office, May 28, 1927.

I AM commanded by the Army Council to reply to your letter dated the 16th May, 1927, as to the Italian instructors who have proceeded to Abyssinia.

The council are of opinion that, as long as it is quite clear that the instructors are only there temporarily, no objection can be raised.

As the Italians are supplying these tanks and armoured cars, the sending out of experts for a short time to instruct in their mechanical use cannot well be cavilled at.

If, however, there is any question of their stay being so prolonged as to become practically or in reality a permanent one, the council adhere to the view they have already given.

In spite of the opinions expressed by the French and Italian Governments that it would be better to refrain from raising the matter at the forthcoming meeting, it appears to the council that, unless the matter is then brought up and a definite agreement come to, it may provide a possible source of friction in the future.

They are, therefore, definitely of the opinion that it should be referred to the meeting.

I am, &c.

A. E. WIDDOWS.

[J 1457/4/1]

No. 67.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 31.)

(No. 1222.)

HIS Majesty's representative at Paris presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note from the French Government, dated the 28th May, respecting the date of meeting for discussion of the question of the importation of arms into Abyssinia.

Paris, May 30, 1927.

Enclosure in No. 67.

French Government to British Embassy, Paris.

PAR sa note en date du 20 mai, l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne a bien voulu faire savoir au Ministère des Affaires étrangères que, d'après une communication du Gouvernement éthiopien au Ministre de Sa Majesté à Addis-Ababa, les représentants abyssins, à la réunion projetée pour la discussion de la question de l'importation des

armes en Abyssinie, ne pourraient pas se trouver à Paris, même pour la fin du mois de juillet, en raison du délai que demandera la préparation des instructions nécessaires. En conséquence, le Gouvernement britannique pense que l'ajournement de ladite réunion est inévitable.

Le Ministère des Affaires étrangères, qui prend bonne note de cette information, comprend les raisons devant lesquelles le Gouvernement britannique croit devoir s'incliner en cette circonstance. Il est d'accord avec lui pour estimer qu'en présence de l'attitude du Gouvernement éthiopien aucune autre solution ne peut être envisagée qu'un ajournement. Il serait, d'ailleurs, en ce qui le concerne, tout disposé à accepter le mois d'octobre comme nouvelle date, ainsi que le propose le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté.

Paris, le 28 mai 1927.

[J 1742/4/1]

No. 68.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 143.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, May 21, 1927.

THE day before I saw your telegram No. 69 of the 11th instant, which was somewhat delayed on the way, I learnt that the rifles in question had just been transported to Addis Ababa from Jibuti for immediate distribution to the soldiers in view of the arrival on the 18th instant of the Duke of the Abruzzi and the consequent massing in Addis Ababa of soldiers from various parts of the country. On receipt of your telegram I mentioned the matter to my Italian and French colleagues. My French colleague told me that the rifles, 17,000 in number, had been sent up from Jibuti by orders issued by the French Minister of the Colonies to the Governor of French Somaliland in spite of M. Gaussen's recommendation that the matter should wait over for submission to the forthcoming Arms Conference at Paris (my telegram No. 43). M. de Scey said that the rifles were already in the hands of the Abyssinian authorities, and so out of his, and he felt pretty sure, as I did, that they had already been distributed. In that case we fear that there is now no possibility of having them stamped. This should have been done at Jibuti before despatch.

2. I may here observe that this is not the first time that orders have been issued by the French Minister of the Colonies to the Governor of French Somaliland in connection with the transport of arms to Addis Ababa, in defiance of the recommendations of the French Minister here.

3. The rifles were sold by the Comptoir européen, a Belgian firm, some say for 1½, others for 3, dollars each. They are gras rifles, and said to be very old, having been at Jibuti for the last twenty years. It is to be hoped that they lack cartridges.

No doubt this action on the part of the French Ministry of the Colonies will be borne in mind when the general question of rifles for Abyssinia is considered in October.

4. I may here observe, in explanation of my telegrams Nos. 67, 79 and 85, that it should not be forgotten that in this country Ras Taffari endeavours to do everything himself, and cannot trust his subordinates. Thus he is at the same time in fact Minister for Foreign Affairs, Master of Ceremonies, Minister of War, of Communications, &c. For many weeks before the arrival of the Duke of the Abruzzi, Ras Taffari was busy supervising the construction and repair of roads, re-arming and smartening his body-guard, building and furnishing a new house for himself to live in, as he has given up his own to the Duke, arranging for a new garden with plants supplied by the Legations, telegraphing wildly at the eleventh hour to England and India for fruits, dinner service, &c. It is then but natural that he should have been totally unable to give to the two memoranda which I gave him in preparation for the forthcoming Arms Conference the attention necessary to enable him to issue the required instructions to his representatives. The fact that we had arranged the date especially to meet his wishes, and that a sudden postponement would cause great inconvenience in Europe, cannot, I think, be appreciated in Abyssinia, where things are always thought of and done, if done at all, at the very last moment, and where the guiding principle is "Always put off till to-morrow what you should do to-day"! I shall see that Ras Taffari does not forget the memoranda after the departure of the Duke of the Abruzzi.

5. I should here observe that M. Gaussen and M. Cora have always held, and I agree, that, as it is we who are doing the Abyssinians a good turn in holding the Arms Conference, it is they and not we who stand to lose by the delay. We can, we think, well afford to wait if they are in no hurry.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

P.S.—I informed my two colleagues and M. Guariglia, of the Italian Foreign Office, that the conference could not now meet before October. M. Guariglia was much disappointed that it had not been found possible for the three European Powers to hold a preliminary and informal discussion among themselves before admitting the Abyssinians to participate. He thought it important that we should reach a preliminary agreement. M. Cora said that his Government were furious at the action of the French Government in permitting the transport from Jibuti to Addis Ababa of the above-mentioned rifles.

C. H. B.

May 24, 1927.

[J 1759/4/1]

No. 69.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 162. Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, June 1, 1927.

WITH reference to paragraph 7 of my despatch No. 111, Confidential, of the 14th April last, and to the postscript to my despatch No. 143 of the 21st ultimo regarding the question of arms for Abyssinia, I have the honour to report that, during the general rush on the occasion of the visit of the Duke of the Abruzzi, it was impossible for me to discuss the question with my Italian colleague and Signor Guariglia as we should have wished. All we could manage was to exchange a few hurried views at a party with eavesdroppers around us! Commendatore Cora, however, tells me he had an opportunity to speak on the subject with Signor Guariglia, who shared the view to which my Italian colleague adheres strongly that all orders for arms to be made in future by the Abyssinian Government should be shared equally between the three interested Powers.

2. The advantage, it seems to me, of this course would be that, if loyally carried out, no one country would be tempted to endeavour to gain favour in connection with the supply of arms at the expense of the other two. The objections which M. Gaussen advanced from a military point of view are doubtless sound, and besides, it seems to me that it might be a little difficult to persuade the Abyssinian Government to agree to tie their hands in this manner and not to give an order for rifles to any one particular country. The danger which the French fear of their applying to the Americans might be increased by such a condition. You will remember that, as recorded in paragraph 9 of my despatch No. 12 of the 8th January last, Ras Taffari himself volunteered the suggestion to me that he might order machine guns from one country, rifles from the other, and so on—a suggestion which I was inclined to favour. I understand that M. Gaussen claims the credit for having inspired Ras Taffari with these views, and I fancy that a military man would more readily agree with them than with those of my Italian colleague.

3. I think it as well to report this matter to you, Sir, as both my colleagues appear to hold strong views on the subject and it would be well to be prepared for some differences of opinion upon this matter at the forthcoming Arms Conference.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 1760/4/1]

No. 70.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 167.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, June 4, 1927.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 76 of the 9th May last, I have the honour to report that my Italian colleague tells me that, of the two Italian soldiers who came to instruct the Abyssinians how to drive the tank presented by the Duke of the Abruzzi to Ras Tafari, the one is remaining at the Italian Legation as chauffeur to the Minister, whilst Ras Tafari has asked that the other may remain here for six months as instructor.

2. Meanwhile the Empress's chauffeur, suffering from the excessive self-confidence peculiar to Abyssinians, declares that he knows how to drive the tank already, having driven one fifteen years ago!

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

CHAPTER II.—FRONTIERS AND MIGRATION.

[J 3399/8/1]

No. 71.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 3, 1927.

WITH reference to your letter of the 23rd December, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to state that he has taken note of the policy which the Governor of Kenya intends to follow regarding the situation on the southern frontier of Abyssinia.

2. Mr. Secretary Amery will recollect that the present Governor's predecessor urged the return of the Degodia to Abyssinia. With this in mind, His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa agreed with Hapta Giorgis that the Degodia should be returned once a satisfactory Abyssinian Administration had been established in the southern provinces. Subsequently, Mr. Bentinck expressed appreciation of the work done by the new Abyssinian Governor, Fitaurari Ayella, as a result of which the Abyssinian Government appear to have formed the impression that the British authorities were satisfied that the Abyssinian part of the bargain had been carried out and were about to carry out their own part by returning the Degodia. The Governor of Kenya now says that he wishes to keep the Degodia, who do not desire to return to Abyssinia, and will only do so if compelled by force, which he is unwilling to use. The question therefore arises as to how best to explain to the Abyssinians, if necessity arises, our failure to carry out what they may regard as a promise on our part (cf. paragraph 2 of Mr. Bentinck's despatch No. 192 of the 23rd November, enclosed in the letter from this Department of the 18th December, 1925).

3. Sir Austen Chamberlain understands that Major Miles is now in Nairobi, and, in accordance with the recommendation put forward at the inter-departmental meeting held here on the 29th September, intends to discuss with the Governor the whole question of the future of the South Abyssinian frontier. Since Mr. Bentinck may have to explain the change of policy to the Abyssinian Government, it is suggested that a telegram be addressed to Sir E. Grigg instructing him to concert with Major Miles as to the best means of removing any Abyssinian misapprehensions, and, if possible, of proving to Ras Tafari that the policy which the Government of Kenya now proposes to adopt will harmonise with Abyssinia's interests, having regard to the many changes and tribal movements which have taken place in the last twelve months along the whole length of the Abyssinia-Kenya frontier. If Mr. Amery agrees, Mr. Bentinck will be informed by telegraph of the instructions sent to Sir Edward Grigg, who might be told to repeat to Addis Ababa the recommendations which he is asked to send to your Department.

I am, &c.

MARK PATRICK.

[J 137/54/1]

No. 72.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 18.)

Sir,

Downing Street, January 17, 1927.

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to transmit to you, for the information of Secretary Sir A. Chamberlain, a copy of a telegram to the Governor of Kenya, dated the 10th January, on the subject of the proposed policy of the Government of Kenya regarding the situation on the southern frontier of Abyssinia.

I am, &c.

S. H. WILSON.

[16460]

Enclosure in No. 72.

Telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor of Kenya.

(Confidential, 10th January.)

January 10, 1927.

YOUR confidential despatch of 29th October.

As His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa may have to explain change of policy to Government of Abyssinia (see paragraph 2 of his despatch of 23rd November, 1925), Foreign Office suggest that you should concert with Miles as to best means of removing any Abyssinian misapprehensions and, if possible, proving that policy you now propose to adopt will harmonise with Abyssinian interests, having regard to many changes and tribal movements in last twelve months along whole length of frontier. Please proceed accordingly and forward recommendations by despatch, repeating them to His Majesty's Minister.—AMERY.

[J 556/22/1]

No. 73.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 7.)

(No. 48.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, February 8, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 241 of the 11th December last, I have the honour to report that Bitwoded Getatchu called to see me about ten days ago to say goodbye before proceeding to his new provinces of Kaffa and Maji. He told me that he was really proceeding to Maji, which I told him had been altogether neglected by both of his predecessors. He professed his sincere desire for the best possible relations with His Majesty's consul at Maji, and he hoped that they would be able to arrange all further questions together in a friendly manner, so as to avoid the continual necessity of my making complaints to Ras Tafari about matters which ought to be settled on the spot.

2. The Bitwoded enquired about the frontier, and I showed him the two maps, with Menelik's seal, attached to our treaty of the 6th December, 1907. He seemed particularly interested to see where the Turkhana country lay. He pointed out, however, that no one in Abyssinia understood anything about latitude and longitude, and that the point where latitude 6° north intersected longitude 35° east was meaningless to an Abyssinian. What he wanted was that the frontier should be definitely demarcated on the spot, so that there might be no misunderstandings in the future regarding its actual position. He had himself spoken to Ras Tafari about this, and he begged me to do so also, so as to remove a possible cause of friction.

3. When I saw Ras Tafari on the 1st instant I mentioned my conversation with the Bitwoded. I also showed His Highness the maps and the position of the frontier opposite Maji, as well as of the Turkhana country. I pointed out that His Highness had on several occasions proposed that all our frontiers be delimited, but that when, in compliance with His Highness's wishes, I had suggested last spring that a beginning be made with the Somaliland frontier, His Highness had never even answered my note (see your despatch No. 61). The Ras seemed to have forgotten this. I suggested that possibly the Bitwoded and Mr. Hodson's successor might be able to examine the frontier opposite Maji in accordance with its definition in the Menelik Treaty. His Highness thought that the best plan would be for the Bitwoded and His Majesty's consul together to draw up a memorandum and submit it to us for our consideration. I agreed so far as the line clearly described in the treaty from the intersection of 6° latitude north and 35° degrees longitude east to Lake Rudolph was concerned.

4. I may here mention that this commits us to nothing in advance, but any agreement on the lines of our treaty may help to remove one of the many danger spots in our relations with Abyssinia. I believe both Ras Tafari, the Bitwoded and Ras Kassa to be sincerely desirous of avoiding frontier troubles with us, and I am anxious to meet them half way. I believe that the Bitwoded, who has already left for his provinces, is taking his new task seriously, and the appointment of so big a man may be an indication that the Government, too, realise the importance of placing good and reliable governors on our frontiers. The Bitwoded is a close connection by marriage of the Empress, and his friendship may be useful to us in the future.

A short biographical note of him will be found in paragraph 8 of my annual report for 1925.

I am forwarding a copy of this despatch to Khartum.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 1080/54/1]

No. 74.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received April 30.)

Sir,

Downing Street, April 30, 1927.

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to transmit to you, for the information of Secretary Sir A. Chamberlain, copies of correspondence with the Government of Kenya respecting the situation on the southern frontier of Abyssinia.

I am, &c.

S. H. WILSON.

Enclosure 1 in No. 74.

Acting Governor of Kenya to Mr. Amery.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

March 18, 1927.

I HAVE the honour to refer to your confidential telegram of the 10th January, in which you gave instructions that Major Miles should be consulted as to the best means of removing any misapprehension which may exist on the part of the Abyssinian authorities with regard to the policy adopted by this Government towards Abyssinian immigrants. At the time of writing Major Miles is at Mega; I will discuss this matter further with him on his return, and in the meantime he will be sent a copy of this despatch.

2. Meanwhile I respectfully submit that no material change of policy has taken place, and, as the suggestion appears to arise in connection with the Degodia, I will revert to the facts of that tribe's incursion.

3. On the first occasion that the Degodia crossed the British border, viz., in 1923, the party, which was comparatively small, was returned to Abyssinia, and this action provoked a strong protest from Mr. Russell, the Minister at Addis Ababa (*vide* your confidential despatch of the 29th November, 1923, and the late Sir Robert Coryndon's reply of the 7th April, 1924).

On the second occasion their repatriation was again contemplated in the interests of native tribes resident on our side of the frontier, as it was believed that neither water nor grazing would suffice for the latter as well as the newcomers.

Such a course of action in protection of British subjects and property would have been justifiable even if necessary by recourse to force. But there is, in fact, nothing in the correspondence of that time to show that the use of force on a scale involving considerable military operations was even contemplated, and it was made clear that a condition of repatriation was an assurance of a reasonable and humane administration on the Abyssinian side of the boundary.

4. During the fifteen months which ensued before a sufficiently responsible Abyssinian official arrived it became evident that the Degodia could be accommodated without injury to other residents in the Northern Frontier Province and that their forcible repatriation could not be accomplished without military operations on a large scale. Colonel Llewellyn, the officer commanding troops, reported that so strong was the determination of the tribe not to return to Abyssinia that, in order to achieve their removal, the employment of another battalion in addition to the troops already on the frontier would be necessary. The circumstances that would have warranted the use of force did not exist apart from the fact that this Government was not disposed to enter upon military operations on such a scale and at such a distance. Certainly, no commitment to such measures existed, and I note that in your telegram of the 17th February last you also held this view. I need add nothing further in regard to this incident than to state that every facility that was promised in Kenya despatch No. 149, Confidential, of the 27th August, 1925, which would assist the return of the Degodia was offered to Fitaurari Ayella by Major Miles, short of using armed force. As was explained in Sir Edward Grigg's despatch No. 28,

[16460]

G 2

Confidential, of the 24th January, 1926, and previous correspondence, the Degodia were at one time concentrated at one spot to facilitate their return.

This Government is still prepared to offer all facilities to Fitaaurari Ayella to meet the Degodia and persuade them to return to Abyssinia.

5. With regard to Abyssinian misapprehensions as to the policy of this Government, these can only be allayed by their own measures.

It is generally the case that the Abyssinian side of the frontier affords better land and more abundant water than the British. It would therefore appear that no tribe, and more especially a pastoral people, would cross the frontier except to escape conditions which make life for them intolerable.

This Government has already put before you evidence that it was Abyssinian maladministration that has driven, and may continue to drive, the Boran, Degodia, Gabbra and others from a land of plenty into the undeveloped areas of the Northern Frontier Province of this colony. The latest reports from the officer-in-charge of the Mandera district show that, while recently on the Dawa River, he was besought by three deputations of Abyssinian subjects (Degodia and Shermagi) to allow settlement of their people in British territory on the ground of ill-treatment by Abyssinian officials.

The remedy lies with the Abyssinian Government. They have only to reform their methods of provincial government and tribal emigration will become negligible.

6. It is true that Kenya stands to gain by an increase of its population in that area, but, nevertheless, it is not the policy of this Government deliberately to attract Abyssinian subjects to this side of the border. Steps are being taken to introduce taxation amongst the tribes in the Northern Frontier Province which, while not introduced for this purpose, may have the further effect of checking this unsought emigration.

7. It is difficult to see what other action could be taken by this Government provided, of course, that circumstances permit of the residence of these refugees in British territory. This Government does not propose to refuse refuge to those who are driven out by the maladministration of their rulers if they can find accommodation in British territory without injury to its own people.

8. Regarding the last paragraph of your telegram under reference, I have no recommendation to make other than that the Abyssinian Government themselves protect their own interests by assuring the protection of their own people. I am inviting your attention to the present lack of administration in the Province of Bei on account of which the lives of British officers and men, both military and civil, in the Mandera area are to-day endangered and this colony is being put to heavy unnecessary expense, in contrast to the position in Abyssinian Borana, where I am glad to report that considerable improvement in administration has taken place since Fitaaurari Ayella assumed the Deputy Governorship. It is the hope of all the border officers, and one that I share, that his excellent régime will continue.

I have, &c.

E. B. DENHAM.

Enclosure 2 in No. 74.

Mr. Amery to the Officer Administering the Government of Kenya.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Downing Street, April 26, 1927.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 26, Confidential, of the 18th March in regard to bodies of Degodia and of other tribes who have migrated into Kenya from Abyssinia.

2. I enclose a copy of the letter from the Foreign Office, dated the 3rd January,* on which my telegram of the 10th January was based. It will be seen that the Foreign Office use the expression "change of policy" to indicate that, whereas previously the Government of Kenya considered the intrusion of the Degodia unwelcome and could only regard it as temporary (Sir E. Grigg's despatch No. 28, Confidential, of the 24th January, 1926), they subsequently stated that they were not opposed to their presence in Kenya and were prepared to absorb them (Sir E. Grigg's despatch No. 151, Confidential, of the 29th October, 1926). The fourth paragraph of your despatch under reference explains how this change came about. I agree with you in thinking that it was never intended to repatriate these

* No. 71.

immigrants by force, and that there has been no change of policy on the part of the Kenya Government in this respect.

3. I note that the question will be discussed further with Major Miles on his return from Mega, and I will await a further communication from you after this has been done.

I have, &c.

L. S. AMERY.

[J 1080/54/1]

No. 75.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 149.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 4, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 10 of the 20th January regarding the situation on the southern frontier of Abyssinia, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a letter on this subject from the Colonial Office containing a statement of the policy adopted by the Government of Kenya towards Abyssinian immigrants.

2. Mr. Denham's point of view strikes me as being entirely reasonable, and I hope that Major Miles will be able to convince the Abyssinian authorities that the Government of Kenya are not adopting an obstructive attitude over the Degodia or any other Abyssinian refugees. I shall be glad to receive any reports with which Major Miles may furnish you on this subject.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

CHAPTER III.—GENERAL.

[J 56/56/1]

No. 76.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 10, 1927.)

(No. 246.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, December 18, 1926.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 380 of the 12th November last respecting the new rules of judicial procedure, I have the honour to report that I learn from my French colleague, who, being the defender of the Treaty of 1908 is the spokesman of the Diplomatic Corps on this question, that the matter is still in the hands of the Abyssinian authorities. After the meetings of the Diplomatic Corps reported in Mr. Maclean's despatch No. 181 of the 9th August last, the observations of the heads of foreign missions were forwarded to the Abyssinian Government. The French Minister thinks that the new Swiss judicial adviser, who arrived with me on the 19th ultimo, must now be studying the question. Both he and my Italian colleague, however, feel very strongly that this gentleman will certainly not be able to express any opinion worth having until he has had at least a year's experience of the judicial system of this country. They are both in agreement that we cannot now make any suggestions for further modifications. If we should do so, we shall run the risk of losing what we may now have gained. If, after about a year, we and the new judicial adviser should consider further modifications desirable, we might then revert to the subject. After all, as they point out, the new rules are only provisional and so would be subject to further changes. I see the force of their argument, and I trust that you will agree to my refraining from pressing the point further at this stage. I shall bear your instructions in mind for use whenever opportunity should offer.

2. In conversation to-day I mentioned to my French colleague some points which you had raised. As regards convicted British subjects serving their term in a British prison, M. Gaussen said he did not anticipate any difficulty upon this point which had purposely been omitted in the new "règlement." M. de Bellefonds had advised M. Gaussen that if we insisted on its insertion, we should immediately meet with strong opposition. If it were not mentioned, there was no reason to anticipate any change being made in the present system whereby prisoners are handed over to their respective Legations for safe custody.

3. As regards a clearer definition of what was meant by "crimes," M. Gaussen was of opinion that this had best be done as and when occasion offered, and need not be pressed at present.

4. M. Gaussen shared my view that as soon as I shall have been deprived of the power of pronouncing the death sentence the new tribunal will also be unable to pronounce such a sentence upon a British subject. He advised me to inform the Abyssinian Government and the Special Court of this decision as soon as it shall have been definitely reached. If, as a result, the tribunal should declare itself unable to order capital punishment on an Abyssinian for the murder of a British subject, we did not consider that there would be any very serious objection to this seeing that in almost every case and indeed in every case where a British subject has been murdered, the Abyssinian murderer has invariably succeeded in effecting his escape and all we have been able to obtain has been a sum of money from the Abyssinian Government as compensation for the family of the murdered person. The other points must, I think, be pressed as we go along. The main thing upon which I think we are all agreed is that any definite "règlement" would be a step in the right direction and an improvement upon the present chaotic state of affairs.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 58/22/1]

No. 77.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 10, 1927.)

(No. 248.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, December 18, 1926.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 155A of the 12th instant, I have the honour to report that the Minister of War, who had been very seriously ill for the last week or two, died at 2:30 A.M. on the 12th December, the anniversary of the death of the Emperor Menelik, at the age of 69.

2. The Fitaauri Hapta Giorgis had suffered from chronic rheumatism for a great many years. Latterly, other more serious complications had set in and finally the doctors discovered a cancer. They did not dare to operate, and so it was realised that an early end was inevitable. Two days before his death at 4 A.M., the Fitaauri suddenly gave orders that all his soldiers and retainers were to file past him. He then dressed and sat in his doorway from 5 A.M. to 7 A.M., with the French doctor beside him, whilst all his people passed by and bid him a solemn and last farewell.

3. In paragraph 7 of my annual report for 1925 a biographical note will be found on this popular figure, who had risen from a very humble origin to become the most powerful man in the country. Fitaauri, as already explained, means Colonel of the Advance Guard; that is, Commander-in-Chief of the army. It is a rank above that of a Ras, and even Ras Kassa insisted on the Fitaauri taking precedence of himself. This rank had been given by the Emperor Menelik after the victory of Adowa in 1896. The Fitaauri was one of the prime movers in the revolution of 1916 which resulted in the dethronement of Lij Yasu, the grandson of Menelik, and the succession of the Empress Zauditu, the daughter of Menelik. The Fitaauri was the great buttress of the throne of the Empress. He had also sworn to keep Ras Taffari in his place as Regent and heir to the throne so long as the latter remained loyal to the Empress. Although there was continual jealousy and even friction between him and Ras Taffari, yet the latter knew perfectly well that he could not do without the Fitaauri, and during the Fitaauri's last illness Ras Taffari was greatly upset and anxious about the outlook in the country generally and his own position in particular. Ras Taffari's position, it is generally expected, may suffer considerably from the removal of a man who had no personal axe to grind and no ambitions outside of his own country.

4. The Fitaauri was ignorant and decidedly conservative, not to say reactionary, and had no sympathy with Ras Taffari's desire to advance with the times. So far as he was concerned, Abyssinia was to remain as it was in the days of Menelik. I believe he was at heart distinctly hostile to all foreigners, although he was certainly always courteous and I think genuinely fond of Count Colli. At one time I had faith in him and trusted to his promises, but I found him disappointing.

5. Even if the actual post of Fitaauri (Minister of War or Commander-in-Chief) is never filled in quite the same way in the future, the man upon whom it is thought the mantle of the Fitaauri will fall is Ras Kassa. On him the Empress is likely to lean. If Ras Taffari and Ras Kassa can now pull together, such a combination may prove of immense benefit to the prosperity of the country. Ras Taffari stands at the cross-roads and knows it. He told my Italian colleague that he realised that much would depend upon the manner in which he handled the present situation.

6. At one time it was feared that internal troubles would follow on the death of the Fitaauri. These, I am told, are not likely to occur, although I took the precaution of warning the Governor of Kenya by telegram of the possibility of raids on the frontier should the soldiers get out of hand. Thus far, everything seems surprisingly quiet. One or two Europeans wishing to go into the country, however, have found the heads of their caravans nervous, and they have been obliged, in consequence, to postpone their departure from the capital.

7. My colleagues and I were formally received by the Empress and Ras Taffari on the 14th instant, and expressed to them our sympathy in the loss which had befallen the country. Eight days full mourning has been ordered for the Fitaauri, in which business with the Abyssinian Government was at a standstill. Half-mourning is to continue for forty days.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 56/56/1]

No. 78.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 8.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 16, 1927.

IN view of the considerations adduced in your despatch No. 246 of the 18th December, regarding the new rules of judicial procedure in Abyssinia, I leave to your discretion the choice of opportunity for bringing to the notice of the Abyssinian Government the points raised in my despatch No. 380 of the 12th November.

2. I agree that when the proposed amending Order in Council is finally approved the Abyssinian Government should be informed that the court of His Majesty's consul-general has been deprived of the power to pass sentence of death.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 202/202/1]

No. 79.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 26.)

(No. 21.)

(Telegraphic.)

Cairo, January 26, 1927.

ADDIS ABABA despatch No. 185 and telegram No. 162.

1. Gallini Fahmi Pasha, a leading Copt, called on me to discuss question of new Abuna.

2. Egyptian Copts are, he said, contemplating despatch of a mission to Addis Ababa to work for election of an Egyptian, to which they attach great importance. Mission would not, however, go unless assured of approval of His Majesty's Government.

3. Fahmi Pasha added that he had learnt that alternative to an Egyptian would be an Abyssinian under Italian influence. This could hardly be to the advantage of His Majesty's Government.

4. The Italian Minister has, I have ascertained, called upon Kirk to enquire how matters stand, but has been given no information hitherto.

5. While it might be hard to guarantee that Egyptian Coptic candidate would be pro-British, I imagine alternative of having an Abyssinian amenable to wishes of Italy would be potentially worse.

6. I propose, therefore, subject to your concurrence, to reply that His Majesty's Government, while they cannot intervene in any way in a purely religious matter, will be happy to afford this mission all the usual courtesies and assistance which, as Egypt's representative of so important a religious institution, they would normally be entitled to receive from British Legation in Abyssinia in the absence of an Egyptian mission there.

7. Please reply by telegraph.

(Repeated to Addis Ababa.)

[J 202/202/1]

No. 80.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd (Cairo).

(No. 23.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, January 28, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 21 of the 26th January: Appointment of new Abuna.

I concur.

(Repeated to Addis Ababa, No. 4.)

[J 242/202/1]

No. 81.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 30.)

(No. 6.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, January 29, 1927.

CAIRO telegram No. 21.

I understand both from Ras Taffari and Ras Kassa that there is no question of Abyssinian Abuna. Ras Kassa, who is powerful with the Church, hinted at possibility of one day asking my help in my private capacity in order to secure good and holy man.

I feel we must be very careful not to appear to be dragged into purely religious matter.

Coptic mission if it comes here should arrange first with Abyssinian ecclesiastical authorities and then the Empress as a Coptic mission to a sister Church if Abyssinian Church should so desire. Negotiations must be carried on entirely apart from British Legation, nor must mission on any account be introduced by Legation to the Empress or Ras Taffari.

I think we should help the cause better by abstaining from courtesies and assistance suggested in paragraph 6 of Cairo telegram except such as we are bound to give any Egyptian subject. Otherwise there is danger of misinterpretation by Abyssinians.

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 1.)

[J 235/202/1]

No. 82.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 31.)

(No. 29.)

Sir,

Cairo, January 19, 1927.

WITH reference to paragraph 5 of Addis Ababa despatch No. 234 of the 6th December last, relative to the appointment of a successor to the late Abuna, I have the honour to inform you that this question has received much attention in the Egyptian vernacular press, a summary of whose comments is enclosed.* Papers of widely different political colour and importance are unanimous in resenting any suggestion that the Abyssinians may wish to sever their traditional connection with the Coptic Church in Egypt and in recommending that steps be urgently taken to strengthen this connection. Among the fortifying measures suggested may be noted the appointment of an Egyptian diplomatic representative in Abyssinia, the despatch of Egyptian teachers and technicians to Addis Ababa and the visit to Abyssinia of a deputation of clerical and lay Coptic notables, charged to express the condolences of the Coptic community and to endeavour, by concessions in the Deir-el-Sultan dispute or otherwise, to ensure the maintenance of the Egypto-Abyssinian relationship.

2. I am informed that, with this object, a deputation, of which Gallini Pasha Fahmy and Youssef Pasha Suleiman are probable members, may shortly be formed, and that their mission has the benediction of the Patriarch.

3. I am informed confidentially by the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that a credit is being demanded in the Foreign Office budget for the appointment of an Egyptian consul at Addis Ababa. From the same source I learn that the Wafd attach importance to this representation, not only for the fostering of the Coptic connection, but also for keeping a watch on developments in connection with the Lake Tsana concession, which arouses among Wafdists the suspiciousness always displayed by them towards any Nile projects supported by His Majesty's Government.

My informant feared that some undesirable politician might be appointed Egyptian consul at Addis Ababa.

4. It is relevant to add that, shortly after Count Colli's passage through Egypt, the Italian Minister in Cairo called upon the Patriarch with a request that his Beatitude should ordain a Coptic bishop for Eritrea. The Patriarch replied that he would await an organised demand from the community there. The Marquis Paterno was anxious to learn the latest news about the Abuna's successor, but the Patriarch evaded a reply.

5. It will be observed that the Abyssinian desire for spiritual independence is generally attributed in Egypt to "foreign intrigue."

* Not printed.

[16460]

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6. I am addressing a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.

I have, &c.
LLOYD,
High Commissioner.

[J 231/56/1]

No. 83.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 31.)

(No. 15.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, January 10, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 246 of the 18th ultimo, I have the honour to report that, two days ago, M. Jacques Auberson, the new Swiss legal adviser, who calls himself "Conseiller au Tribunal spécial," called upon me in company with the judge of the Special Court. M. Auberson explained that he had not been able to call upon my colleagues and myself earlier as he was waiting for the judge to find time to bring him. His duties are to act as adviser upon questions of foreign law rather than as judge at the Special Court. I understood, in the course of conversation, that the new "Règlements provisoires" had been submitted to him for his consideration, and that there was a great deal in them with which he was prepared to find fault, so that further delay will probably ensue.

2. M. Auberson comes from Geneva, is 30 years of age, seems pleasant, if somewhat over self-confident. He was at first, I understand, much upset at the usual delays and difficulties which he encountered when he wished to start business.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 349/171/1]

No. 84.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 15, 1927.)

(No. 263. Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, December 31, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to transmit my annual report on the heads of missions at Addis Ababa.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 84.

Report on Heads of Missions at Addis Ababa.

Belgium.

1. M. Gérard continues to hold the post, without fulfilling the duties, of dean of the Diplomatic Corps, much to the annoyance of his colleagues. He went on leave last May and gave out that he would probably not return, but owing to the critical situation in which the alcohol monopoly has been throughout the summer, he cut short his leave and returned here in October. He seems to have little to do, and my colleagues complain that he is inclined to meddle in matters which do not concern him. They also complain that he grovels before the Abyssinians and does not stand up for the dignity of the Diplomatic Corps. My French colleague is the most bitter against M. Gérard, whilst the latter told me, almost weeping, of all the efforts he had made to try to be on friendly terms with our French colleague, as he was instructed by his Government to do so. I imagine that M. Gaussen despises M. Gérard the more heartily for his attempts at friendship made on the top of many rebuffs. According to my French and Italian colleagues, whose information I have found to be practically always accurate, M. Gérard, before proceeding on leave, asked Ras Tafari to give him a letter of good conduct to show to his Government. Ras Tafari approved the draft of a letter submitted to him by M. Gérard, merely adding that he was sending it at M. Gérard's request. I understand that

Ras Tafari was eventually persuaded to omit this sentence. The letter is supposed to have had the desired effect at Brussels.

2. M. Gérard served formerly in a consular capacity in West Africa, Bombay, &c. He had retired from the Belgian Foreign Office when offered the appointment about four years ago of Belgian Minister at Addis Ababa. He says that Ras Tafari asked for a Belgian Minister to be appointed to Addis Ababa in order to advise him on political matters, but M. Gérard finds that his advice is not followed. He is married, and has one son. I have never met his wife, but I understand that she is expected from Belgium within the next few months. M. Gérard has always seemed anxious to be on friendly terms with me and, although I have less in common with him than with the rest of my colleagues, I do not share their antipathy for him, which is affected by the altitude of Addis Ababa.

France.

3. M. Edouard Gaussen served in a consular capacity in China and at Yokohama before the war. Recently, he and Count Colli were colleagues at Buenos Aires, but in neither case was the mission a success. M. Gaussen was appointed to Addis Ababa from the French Foreign Office about three years ago. His wife tells me that he has been offered the Legations at Peking and other good posts, but that, having four small children, they prefer to remain here in order to economise. (The salary of the French Minister amounts, I am told, to the equivalent of £5,000 a year, paid in gold francs.)

4. I have found M. Gaussen an agreeable and friendly colleague to me personally, and he seems genuinely anxious to co-operate with His Majesty's Legation. He professes to desire to be perfectly frank in his relations with me, and, until I have reason to doubt him, I am not prepared to say that I do not trust him. M. Gaussen has a considerable amount of work protecting the interests of a comparatively large French colony, besides those of the Russians and Armenians. He is, after myself, undoubtedly the busiest of the foreign representatives here, but, like all my colleagues, he complains bitterly of never being able to accomplish anything and of the difficulty of getting his Government to understand this.

5. When I arrived M. Gaussen was not on calling terms with our Italian colleague, but fortunately I was able to effect a reconciliation between the two, so that outwardly, at any rate, their relations have now become cordial. As shown above, he dislikes and despises our Belgian colleague, and seems to be obsessed with the idea that M. Gérard and Count Colli are continually intriguing against him, and, of course, the Abyssinians are delighted if they can foster such ideas. Until last summer the French and German Ministers were not on calling terms. Now all has changed. M. Gaussen tells me that if only all our colleagues were like myself and Herr Weiss, we might be a united corps—and Herr Weiss chuckles to me about his new-found friend. I fear M. Gaussen, though active and sometimes too energetic, really suffers more from the climate than any of the Diplomatic Corps. He has made a mistake in his vain efforts to persuade Ras Tafari to dismiss the French doctor at the Abyssinian Government Hospital—merely because he dislikes him. I think he has thereby done himself harm, both here and in Paris. He expects to proceed home on leave in April and, according to Count Colli, he will not return, his successor having already been selected. M. Gaussen has a very pleasant and musical wife, who should prove a help to him at any post.

Italy.

6. Ever since my arrival in May 1925 my wife and I have found in Count and Countess Colli di Felizzano our natural and traditional friends. Count Colli has always professed to be most anxious for the closest co-operation between our two Legations, and according to all reports reaching me he has been as good as his word. In view of his long connection with this country (about twenty-six years) his opinion is useful. He is said to enjoy considerable personal prestige amongst the Abyssinians, and I know that Ras Tafari is inclined at times to look to him for advice. He is, nevertheless, a tired and disappointed man, and he sees no hope of being able to accomplish anything in Abyssinia in present conditions. Yet, he says, he cannot remain quietly here drawing his salary and accomplishing nothing, nor can he continually report to his Government that nothing can be done. (From last year's report.)

7. I have always found Count Colli a charming and loyal colleague. He has been my best and surest source of information. He left on Christmas Day, and I

[16460]

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deeply regret his departure. He is a prematurely tired man, and I expect the doctors' orders have accomplished his retirement. He has no use for Facism, but seems to have enjoyed the respect and confidence of M. Mussolini. He is of an outspoken and hasty temperament, of which the French Minister has had the benefit on occasions. He has always been convinced that M. Gaussen is intriguing against himself and me, and although the French and Italian Legations are now on visiting terms there is no love lost between them. Count Colli had no use for M. Gérard and, I fancy, little use for Herr Weiss, but I have experienced nothing but friendship from him.

8. M. Cora, who married Countess Colli's daughter by a previous marriage, arrived here on the 17th December to succeed Count Colli, and he hopes some day to be received by the Empress. He was a colleague of mine as secretary in Tokyo in 1919 and a consul-general in Munich in 1924 and 1925. He served for a short time at Tehran, but left on account of his wife's health. Fascist intrigue forced him to leave Munich shortly after I did in 1925. He was appointed Minister to Durazzo, but did not proceed, and remained at Rome. He hopes that his wife, who is charming, will be able to join him here next year. He has had about six years' previous service in this country, which he likes. He has now replaced me as the youngest head of mission here. Count Colli assures me that I shall find in M. Cora as loyal a colleague as I have found in himself.

Germany.

9. Herr Weiss, the German Chargé d'Affaires, mentioned in my predecessor's report for 1925 as being absent on leave, returned about February last and presented to the Empress letters appointing him Minister Plenipotentiary. Until then he had served in Abyssinia for about four years as Chargé d'Affaires, so that, after Count Colli, he probably knows next most about this country. He served previously for many years in a consular capacity in China. Like all my colleagues, he suffers from the climate. Though only about two years my senior, he is a prematurely weary and old man, and like our Belgian and Italian colleagues he seldom leaves his compound, where, like his Italian colleague but unlike his British colleague, he is supplied with water, drainage and electric light. He is also fortunate enough to find plenty of time for reading, is a great lover of Shakespeare and of classical music, has a sense of humour and is consequently good company and a friendly colleague. My French colleague is the only person who has suggested to me that I cannot trust Herr Weiss. He has a pleasant wife, who appears to take the lead, which he is too weary to follow. Unlike him, she has no sense of humour, nor is she musical, but she is distinctly "horsey," and goes on shooting expeditions with two nice small children and a pleasant young secretary called Dr. Haas. (Above from last year's report.)

10. My relations with Herr Weiss have all along been very good. I have reason to know that he trusts me. He is of a calmer temperament than our Latin colleagues, but appears to have no more use for the Austrian consul than had, until recently, the French Minister for himself.

Turkey.

11. Muni Bey arrived here from Kabul about February 1926 as Turkish Chargé d'Affaires. He was disappointed on arrival at finding no letters accrediting him to the Ethiopian Government and at learning that, until they arrived, neither the Empress nor Ras Tafari could receive him. He was embarrassed, too, when applying to the bank for money, to learn that proof was required that he really was Turkish Chargé d'Affaires. He is a man of about 55 years of age, and as he does not ride he has been somewhat handicapped in getting about. The German Minister took him under his wing from the first, and I must confess that, in spite of his nationality, I share the view of my German and French colleagues, that he is a really nice man. My efforts to create a united Diplomatic Body have, I feel, his full sympathy. He appears to have little to do, but has been an interested, if detached, spectator of events passing around him.

Greece.

12. Besides the above, there is an honorary Greek consul-general, Dr. Zervos, who is medical adviser to Ras Tafari. He is a pleasant gentleman, professes to be pro-British, which I see no reason to doubt, but is greatly overworked attending to the interests of his large Greek colony. (Above from last year's report.)

Austria.

13. Dr. Weinsinger, an Austrian merchant, was honorary consul for Austria. Both he and his wife are pleasant and friendly. Dr. Weinsinger left Abyssinia to start a kind of propaganda newspaper at Paris on behalf of Ras Tafari. Further editions of this newspaper are to be printed in Addis Ababa, and Dr. Weinsinger is expected back shortly to attend to this. After sounding both myself and Count Colli privately about taking charge of Austrian interests, he finally handed them over to the German Minister.

[J 362/22/1]

No. 85.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 15.)

(No. 25. Confidential.)

Addis Ababa, January 19, 1927.

Sir,
IN paragraph 6 of my despatch No. 227, Confidential, of the 29th November last, I reported that my French and Italian colleagues held the view, which was also shared by others claiming an intimate knowledge of this country, that if the Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis should die, the position of Ras Tafari would become weakened rather than strengthened and that there would probably be a lack of discipline throughout the country. In view of his twenty-six years' connection with Abyssinia, I have always paid great respect to the opinions of Count Colli. He has consistently maintained that, in spite of jealousies, the Fitaurari has been the mainstay of Ras Tafari and that the latter would have great difficulty in getting along without him.

2. The opposite view has, however, been held by others perhaps less intimately acquainted with conditions in the country, namely, that the Fitaurari was the great stumbling-block to all progress and reform and that his death would give to Ras Tafari a far freer hand to march with the times in accordance with what is expected of a country admitted to membership of the League of Nations. Count Colli, however, would never admit that anyone who knew the true state of affairs in the country could hold this view. He had perhaps pinned too much faith in the Fitaurari, whose great willingness or ability to act on a promise I had begun to doubt.

3. Ras Tafari was, I think, filled more with anxiety than personal grief at the Fitaurari's death (see my despatch No. 248 of the 18th December, 1926), whilst Ras Kassa was scarcely, I think, disturbed by either of these sentiments. He certainly had nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain by the removal of a man whose power was greater than his own and over whom he had far less influence than he has over the Empress and Ras Tafari.

4. Although it is perhaps a little early to judge, yet as things stand at present, the gloomy forebodings of Count Colli do not appear to have been realised. M. Cora and I, comparing notes a few days ago, have both derived the impression that Ras Tafari is in very good spirits and feels decidedly firmer in his saddle than formerly. Whether this optimism on the part of His Imperial Highness is justified, remains to be seen. My French colleague thinks that after about a year we may find the tribes in the outlying provinces getting out of hand. Certainly we do not hear of troubles at present and lack of discipline is not more evident than usual. Everything would seem to be going on as before. I have derived the impression that the friendship between Ras Tafari and Ras Kassa has not weakened. With the support of Ras Kassa, Ras Tafari would appear to be getting a freer hand than he had before. The opposition which His Imperial Highness always encountered in the Council of the Elders seems to be less. If Ras Tafari and Ras Kassa should now succeed in carrying the Empress with them, some progress may indeed become possible—but it is unwise to draw too many conclusions or to be too sanguine at present.

5. Dr. Martin continues to bewail the lack of progress and education in the country. In his view the death of the Fitaurari merely means the removal of one of many reactionaries and he holds that until the many reactionaries die, no perceptible advance will be possible in the country. Things are, he declares, worse than before, since the Anglo-Italian Agreement has practically driven Abyssinia into the arms of France. France, he declares, whilst telling us in Europe that she is working with us in this country, is all the while telling the Abyssinians that they can count upon her support against us if they will put themselves into her hands. Ras Tafari, I am told, is beginning to realise that the French may strangle Abyssinia, occupying, as they do, a strangle-hold over her at Jibuti. But although His Highness may realise this one

day, being as he is an impulsive and weak man, he may, as likely as not, act to-morrow in just the opposite sense to what he may resolve to do to-day. My French colleague tells me that he does not consider Ras Kassa really intelligent. Ras Kassa had said to him, with reference to Abyssinia's complaint to the League of Nations last summer, that Providence had intervened to save Abyssinia—as He would always do.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch to Nairobi and Khartum.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 428/22/1]

No. 86.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 21.)

(No. 38.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, February 1, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 248 of the 18th December last, I have the honour to report that last week, on the fortieth day after the death of the Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis, the will was opened and read. He left his private property to his relatives, excepting his stone house in Addis Ababa. This, together with all his furniture, garden and land surrounding the house is left to the Abyssinian Government. The rent of this house is to go towards the expenses of an annual mourning feast in memory of the Emperor Menelik.

2. The contents of the will came as a surprise to Ras Tafari and the deceased's family. His widow is, I am told, dissatisfied, declaring that she has not received enough. Others were surprised that nothing should have been left either to Ras Tafari or to the Empress. His Highness is consoled at not having been remembered by the fact that the Empress is in the same position.

3. A few days ago Ras Tafari observed to Mr. Zaphiro how greatly the death of the Fitaurari had added to his own worries and responsibilities. He had, he said, never before realised what a great amount of work the Fitaurari had taken off his own shoulders. He added that that very morning, 3,000 retainers of the Fitaurari had come to him praying to be enrolled in his bodyguard, now that their own master was dead.

4. My French colleague tells me that, although Ras Tafari and Ras Kassa are very intimate and seem to be pulling well together for the moment, yet both are anxious to succeed to the army of retainers of the Fitaurari. Whoever should succeed to this would outbalance the other in power and influence in the country. Ras Kassa would, however, appear to be the only big man whom Ras Tafari trusts and whose advice he is ready to follow. This His Highness made clear to Mr. Zaphiro.

5. The Fitaurari's provinces are, I understand, not likely to be divided for about a year. When this happens, it will be for the Abyssinian Government to appoint the various Governors. Ras Tafari seems for the moment to be most anxious to remove all cause for friction with us, and is now appointing a commission to proceed to the Boran country to investigate, in conjunction with His Majesty's consul at Mega, the various raids of which I had cause to complain to him, and which were referred to in Mr. Maclean's despatch No. 209 of the 23rd October last.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 491/202/1]

No. 87.

Sir O. Russell to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 28.)

(No. 34.)

Sir,

British Legation to the Holy See,

Rome, February 24, 1927.

I HAVE the honour to report that some attention is being paid here, in religious and political circles alike, to the choice of a new Abuna of the Abyssinian Church. Last summer, the Catholic Church raised to the dignity of beatification the Abyssinian martyr, Ghebre Michael, who in 1841 left with the delegation who visited Egypt for the purpose of asking the Coptic Patriarch for an Abuna. Part of the delegation went on to Rome with

the Prefect Apostolic, and among them was Ghebre Michael, who became a Catholic and, returning to Abyssinia, was martyred. This episode is now being recalled, and the question is being asked whether the Abyssinians will long endure the "humiliation" of seeking the head of their Church in Egypt or whether they will not rather turn next time, if not this, to Rome. In this connection it is stated that the atmosphere is now more favourable towards a Romeward movement. The audience of Ras Tafari in 1925 with the Pope, the work of Catholic priests in Abyssinia and the encouragement which is being given to the formation of a native Abyssinian priesthood through the Ethiopian College in Rome—all these are important factors in the situation. At present, I believe, practically all the students at the Ethiopian College here, about twenty in number, are from Eritrea and are destined for work in that colony, but an enlargement of the college is under consideration with a view to extending its scope. I am unaware how far it would be true to say that this extension of Catholic influence is due to assistance from Italian diplomacy, but the insinuations to this effect which have been made lately in one or two Italian papers are in keeping with the propaganda aimed at representing Italy as the great Catholic Power.

A copy of this despatch has been sent to His Majesty's Ambassador.

I have, &c.

(For the Minister),

A. W. G. RANDALL.

[J 464/202/1]

No. 88.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 25.)

(No. 47.)

(Telegraphic.)

Cairo, February 24, 1927.

ADDRESSED to Addis Ababa:—

"Your telegram No. 1.

"Gallini Pasha is now following a different line. Yesterday he informed me that probably on account of Dar-es-Sultan dispute Abyssinian Government had maintained complete silence ever since exchange of telegrams following Abuna's death. Normal request for appointment of a new Abuna not having been received, Coptic Patriarch considered that his dignity prevented him from taking the initiative. No one here, therefore, knew in the least what was going on at Addis Ababa. Gallini added that, in view of large number of Greeks and Armenians in Abyssinia and their capacity for intrigue, he feared nomination of a Greek Orthodox. Ras Tafari's education under Catholic auspices and pressure from Italy might lead to a Catholic appointment, but he regarded this possibility as remote.

"2. I made it plain to Gallini Pasha that His Majesty's Government would in no event intervene in a purely religious question; but I promised, on his urgent request, to endeavour to ascertain how matters stood. I should, therefore, be grateful if you would telegraph any information in your possession.

"3. I should appreciate also a confidential expression of your views as to relative desirability of a Coptic and a Greek appointment. Greek Patriarch here has always proved extremely friendly and helpful; and potential advantages to us of a Greek Orthodox appointment appear to me considerable. A Greek would be likely to be anti-Italian in sentiment and inaccessible to Egyptian intrigue in regard to Tsana.

"4. Gallini said in conclusion that it would be futile to send proposed mission until the horizon was a little clearer. He would, therefore, await your answer to this telegram before coming to any decision. If mission goes you obviously must decide manner of its reception, but I would point out that any treatment which could subsequently be represented as lacking in cordiality would have an unfortunate effect here at a moment when Egyptian Government have just decided to create a consulate rather than a Legation at Addis Ababa."

[J 522/202/16]

No. 89.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 3.)

(No. 19.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, February 28, 1927.

ADDRESSED to Cairo:—

"Your telegram No. 47.

"Although there is movement in favour of appointing Abyssinian Abuna, Ras Taffari told oriental secretary yesterday that Abyssinian Government would never agree. Ras Taffari will shortly write to Patriarch of Alexandria about an Abuna, who, if appointed, is to be head of religious matters, but not to interfere in any way in politics as did the late Abuna. Dar-es-Sultan monastery question will in no way influence the new Abuna's selection. Ras Taffari volunteered an expression of surprise at prospects of visit of special mission to Addis Ababa in connection with Abuna's appointment. Ras Taffari also questioned necessity for appointing Egyptian consul.

"Selection of Abuna from outside Coptic Church is, I consider, excluded. I think Coptic Church would be well advised to go slow in this matter; Abyssinians are never in a hurry and undue haste might lead to misinterpretation of motives. In any case I rely upon you to give me a timely warning before mission starts."

[J 859/22/1]

No. 90.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 7.)

(No. 72. Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, February 28, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 241 of the 11th December last and to paragraph 4 of my despatch No. 38 of the 1st instant, I have the honour to report that the much coveted post of Minister of War has now been given to Dejazmatch Mulugeta, up to the present Minister of Finance. Under him Ligaba Wodajei has been appointed Chief of Staff of what is known as Menelik's army. The 16,000 men comprising the army of the late Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis, however, have still to be disposed of. Ras Taffari told the oriental secretary to His Majesty's Legation that it is his intention to get the command of this army into his own hands, as well as the lands from which this army receives its pay. Thus, the duties of the late Fitaurari have been given to two people, who are quarrelling about questions of precedence, and a third party intends ere long to take the lion's share of the spoil.

2. Other appointments now announced are that of Nagadras Zallacka, hitherto Chief of the Customs, to be Minister of Finance. The appointment of such a notoriously avaricious character to control the finances of the country has caused no little surprise. The late Minister of Finance, being perhaps in a position to know the character of his successor, has taken care to insist that the money annually assigned to the army shall come straight to himself and not pass through the somewhat sticky hands of Nagadras Zallacka—hence, further friction has arisen.

3. Dejazmatch Wolde Gabriel, the Empress's chief chamberlain, has been made a "Bitwodded" ("Beloved"). The title "Bitwodded" is looked upon as a singular distinction and favour conferred in recognition of long service, but it carries no weight. The only other person possessing this distinction is Bitwodded Getatchu, mentioned in my despatch No. 241. His appointment to the far-off Province of Maji, through the influence of Ras Taffari and Ras Kassa, is possibly a gain to them, but a loss to the Empress's party.

4. Azaz Dagafi, hitherto Minister of Agriculture, has been appointed assistant to the "Bitwodded" of the palace. To Tsafi Tizaz Wolde Maskal, the Privy Seal, the duties of Minister of Agriculture and Industry have been assigned in addition to those of Privy Seal. The Department of Agriculture had been offered to Fitaurari Amdei, who refused. The last named is said to be very influential at present with Ras Taffari, but his influence is not for the good.

5. Notes upon all the above-mentioned persons will be found in paragraphs 7 and 8 of my annual report for 1925. The new Chief of Staff, I should add, accompanied Ras Taffari to Europe in 1924.

6. Ato Sahle Sadalou, the Foreign Secretary, mentioned in paragraph 10 of my annual report for 1925, is seriously ill with tuberculosis, and has had to

relinquish his duties. Berhana Marcos, the Director of the Post Office, has taken Ato Sahle's place. This change has afforded pleasure to my Italian and German colleagues, but the French Minister does not seem pleased, although Berhana Marcos was educated by the French Roman Catholic Mission and is himself a Roman Catholic. As I scarcely know Berhana Marcos, I cannot express any opinion about him.

7. M. de Bellefonds, the French legal adviser to the Government, has had his contract renewed for six months only. From information reaching me, I had gathered that his days were numbered, but six months is capable of further renewal. The new Swiss legal adviser to the Special Court, M. Auberson, has hopes of succeeding M. de Bellefonds. M. Auberson has not made a fortunate start in his relations with the French and German Legations, and altogether he is shy of being seen going to any Legation in view of his appointment under the Abyssinian Government. Ras Taffari has not yet made up his mind as to whether to appoint M. Auberson in the place of M. de Bellefonds. Another possible successor to M. de Bellefonds is Maître Chanoit, who, I believe, could have succeeded him already if he had wished. I should have nothing against him beyond his French nationality. My Italian colleague heard that Herr Weinzinger, the Austro-Jewish editor of the anti-British and Italian newspaper "Correspondance d'Ethiopie," had hopes of succeeding M. de Bellefonds. As M. Cora and I are not prepared to receive Herr Weinzinger, I authorised Mr. Zaphiro to give a hint to Ras Taffari regarding his rumoured appointment. His Highness said that in no circumstances would he appoint Herr Weinzinger legal adviser to the Abyssinian Government.

8. My colleagues had looked upon the above-mentioned appointments of the Empress's friends as the work of Ras Kassa and not likely to please Ras Taffari. His Highness, however, told Mr. Zaphiro that he and Ras Kassa had purposely selected second-rate men for the posts in order that they themselves should retain the real power in their own hands. Hitherto, Tsafi Tizaz had appointed and controlled all the secretaries of the various Ministers. Ras Taffari told Mr. Zaphiro that he and Ras Kassa had decided that each Minister should henceforward appoint his own secretary. In return for this loss of power, they had given Tsafi Tizaz the Ministry of Agriculture.

9. Ras Taffari also told Mr. Zaphiro that the new Minister of War would have nothing to say in the Boran country. His Highness intended to control this part of the country himself. He would appoint a really good Governor there, who should be directly under his orders, and he would see that there would be no further cause for friction with us.

I am forwarding copies of paragraphs 1, 2, 8 and 9 to Khartum, Nairobi, Mega and Harrar.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 967/202/1]

No. 91.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 19.)

(No. 96.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, March 29, 1927.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 75 of the 3rd instant forwarding a copy of despatch No. 34 from His Majesty's Minister to the Holy See. I notice that the question is being asked (at the Vatican, I assume) whether the Abyssinians will not turn to Rome for a future Abuna. I was surprised to notice in a recent telegram from Cairo that it was suggested there that a Greek Orthodox or a Roman Catholic Abuna might be selected. I replied to Lord Lloyd that I considered that the selection of an Abuna from outside the Coptic Church was excluded. The only possible, but unlikely, exception would be an Abyssinian Abuna. As already reported, there is a party, opposed to Ras Taffari and Ras Kassa, which favours this, with the idea of forming a powerful clerico-political and nationalist party.

2. As paragraph 97 of my annual report for 1925, and my despatch No. 33 of the 16th February, 1926, will show, the Roman Catholic Missions have long been doing a good work in this country. The missionaries are, however, not appreciated, and the dislike of the Swedish and American Protestant Missions by the Abyssinian authorities is much less than that of the Roman Catholics. The Abyssinian priesthood, however, dislikes all foreign missionaries equally. I think the Roman Catholic Missions must

[16460]

1

have failed to make this fact clear to the Vatican if such ideas can be entertained there as are suggested in the despatch from the Holy See under reference. I think the Abyssinian Church and Government might almost as soon ask the Archbishop of Canterbury to send them an Abuna as to apply for one to Rome!

I am forwarding a copy of this despatch to Cairo.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 1007/202/1]

No. 92.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 23.)

(No. 140.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

MY telegram No. 47.

Cairo, April 23, 1927.

I am informed that Empress and Ras Taffari have telegraphed to Coptic Patriarch asking him designate Abuna.

(Repeated to Addis Ababa.)

[J 1081/202/1]

No. 93.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 1.)

(No. 66.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

MY despatch No. 98.

Addis Ababa, April 29, 1927.

Ras Taffari told oriental secretary yesterday that Abyssinian Government have asked Patriarch to give new Abuna power to consecrate Abyssinian bishops. Abyssinian Government are now awaiting the Patriarch's reply.

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 14.)

[J 1087/202/1]

No. 94.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 2.)

(No. 98.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, March 31, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 96 of the 29th instant respecting the new Abuna, I have the honour to report that Belata Herui told me yesterday that the Abyssinian Government had definitely decided to ask the Patriarch of Alexandria to appoint the new Abuna—this in spite of the strong feeling in the country in favour of an Abyssinian Abuna. Belata thought that about April the Government would send a special mission to the Patriarch. I said that I hoped that they would succeed in getting a holy man. Belata said there was not the slightest chance of this. He did not think there was a single holy man to be found in the Coptic Church. The only good Abuna on record was Frumentius (Fremenatos), who had held that office in about the 4th century, and he was a Greek. There was no record of any other Abuna ever having done anything for the good of the country. The Government did not, however, dare to break with tradition. The mission would therefore proceed to Alexandria with a great quantity of gold, and the Government would pay heavily for the Abuna whom the Patriarch would select. The Abuna would probably be wealthy and would thus be respected and feared by the people, whether he were a good man or not, as had been the case with the late Abuna, Matteos.

2. Belata was much amused at my question as to whether there was any chance of an application being made to Rome for an Abuna!

3. I should perhaps explain that Belata Herui is a very religious man, but can hardly be considered as belonging any longer to the Abyssinian Church. He is most helpful to the Protestant missionaries. He seems to have little hope in the future of the Abyssinian Church, and explained that anyone wishing to become a priest in Abyssinia merely had to pay a sum of money to the Bishop for ordination.

I am forwarding a copy of this despatch to Cairo.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 1596/56/1]

No. 95.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 14.)

(No. 138.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, May 9, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 246 of the 18th December last respecting the new rules of judicial procedure, I have the honour to report that, when he called upon me, the new Swiss legal adviser seemed anxious to learn your views upon the whole subject, and that I accordingly authorised Mr. A. L. Gardiner, the local British barrister, whom I had acquainted with the contents of your despatch No. 380 of the 12th November last, to discuss the matter privately with M. Auberson. In conversation with myself, M. Auberson insisted that we must reach some permanent rather than a provisional arrangement.

2. Since then I have frequently asked the French Minister how the matter stood, and he complained that M. Auberson was holding up the question. He had pressed M. de Bellefonds to get the matter expedited.

3. Just before he left, however, M. Gaussen told my Italian colleague and myself that he had received a message from Ras Taffari saying that he had changed his mind on the subject since last summer, and that he was now no longer willing to depute his sovereign duties of Judge of the High Court to another. M. Gaussen was furious, and threatened that unless this question were satisfactorily settled before his departure on the 20th April, the Abyssinians would not be able to count upon his friendship when the arms question was brought up in Paris at the forthcoming conference. A stormy farewell interview with Ras Taffari ensued, and the result was the enclosed note which the French Chargé d'Affaires sent to the dean of the Diplomatic Corps for circulation.

4. M. Gaussen certainly understood that the judicial adviser mentioned at the end of the note was to be a European, but the note does not say so. M. Gaussen tried hard to persuade Ras Taffari to agree, at any rate, not to judge a case in which he or the Abyssinian Government might be involved. But in this he failed, and Ras Taffari, it will be seen, only consents to the High Court of Appeal judging cases of minor importance.

5. My Italian colleague feels that we can do nothing more for the moment. He points out that, however disappointed we may be, the Ras has only changed his mind as regards the High Court, but that the rest of the "règlement" has been retained, and that we have hopes of better things since Ras Taffari consents not to judge every case and to bring what M. Gaussen expects—another adviser from Europe within a year. I do not entirely agree with M. Cora, and I propose to ascertain the views of my other colleagues on the subject.

6. I may here mention that in the course of conversation with the Maharao of Kutch I referred to the many difficulties which we diplomats encounter in this country owing to Ras Taffari's attempts to do everything himself, including giving judgments on appeal. This, I said, caused everything to become congested. Subsequently the Maharao, in conversing with Ras Taffari, very tactfully told him of his own experiences in Kutch, and how that he himself could not possibly find the time to judge all the numerous judicial cases, but was obliged to depute such duties to his Ministers! Whether Ras Taffari took the advice to heart, remains to be seen.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 95.

Note to French Chargé d'Affaires.

M. le Plénipotentiaire,

Addis-Ababa, le 10 miazia 1919 (18 avril 1927).

EN parlant de toute question relative au projet du nouveau règlement judiciaire que notre Gouvernement se propose de promulguer pour le tribunal spécial, vous avez bien voulu m'exprimer verbalement votre intention amicale. Moi aussi j'ai clairement signalé à Son Altesse le Prince héritier du trône Tafari Makonnen que votre intention est tout amicale.

Je ne doute pas que vous ne manquiez pas de porter votre attention sur l'amélioration de tout le service judiciaire, qui avance déjà du fait que Son Altesse

[16460]

12

le Prince héritier du trône a institué un tribunal spécial pour le bon règlement de tout différend qui surgira entre les Ethiopiens et les étrangers.

Or, je suis chargé et j'ai l'honneur de vous faire connaître que, bien que tout appel doive, conformément aux termes du traité, venir devant le tribunal du Roi des Rois, le Prince veut instituer une cour d'appels moins importants, en se réservant, cependant, d'en voir lui-même les plus importants, pour permettre le règlement rapide des affaires des parties, désigner un juge principal pour ladite cour d'appels moins importants et engager, pour ce juge, d'ici à un an, un conseiller juridique connaissant le droit.

BERHANE MARCOS.

[J 1743/1743/1]

No. 96

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 144. Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, May 25, 1927.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith my annual report on the leading personalities in this country, which I understand is now to be separated from the general annual report. Biographical notes on most of these people were forwarded to you, Sir, both in my annual report No. 111 of the 15th May, 1926, and subsequently by Mr. Maclean in his despatch No. 186 of the 28th August, 1926. These notes have now been brought up to date and several biographies added. I am indebted to Messrs. Zaphiro, Homé and Taylor for their assistance in compiling them.

2. For convenience of reference they have been divided into four sections. Section 1 contains the Empress, Ras Taffari and the members of the Crown Council. Section 2 contains the Council of Advisers of eighteen members. It should be noted that Tsafi Tizaz Wolde Meskal is both a member of the Crown Council and President of the Council of Advisers. Section 3 contains other leading personalities, such as Governors of Provinces, &c., whose influence must be reckoned with. Section 4 contains seven men, whom we will call the "lesser lights."

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 96.

REPORT ON LEADING PERSONALITIES IN ABYSSINIA.

Section 1.—The Empress, Ras Taffari and Members of the Crown Council.

The Empress Zauditou.

The Empress Zauditou is now about 52 years of age. She was placed on the throne in 1917 when her nephew, the uncrowned Emperor Lij Yasu, was deposed. She is the daughter of the Emperor Menelik by a Wollo lady, not his wife. Her first and her fourth and present husband is Ras Gugsu Wolye, a nephew of the late Empress Taitu. He is Governor of the Province of Gondar, which comprises the northern and eastern shores of Lake Tsana, and borders on the Sudan at and north of Gallabat. He is not allowed to come to Addis Ababa lest he should interfere in the government or misgovernment of the country. The Empress is greatly interested in Queen Victoria, and is never tired of asking questions about her late Majesty and her long reign. She has but little power of a positive kind, leaving the government of the country in the hands of Ras Taffari and advisers. She has, however, considerable negative power, which she delights in exercising from time to time so as to block anything in the nature of progress and reform which Ras Taffari may wish to introduce into the country. She can also be appealed to as a last resource by a foreign Legation over the head of Ras Taffari, and the threat of such an appeal is one of the few methods which a foreign Legation has for bringing the Ras to reason. Being the daughter of the Emperor Menelik and "the elect of God," she can rely on the support of the whole Conservative and Clerical party of the country, and is thus really in a very strong position. Having never left the country and being scarcely able to read or write, she is incapable of managing the affairs of State, and spends most of her time in the company of

priests and in churches, trying, perhaps, to atone for the past, which, as is reported, is not above the standard of many others in this country who profess and call themselves Christians.

Lij Yasu (more properly spelt "Iyasu").

The uncrowned ex-Emperor of Abyssinia, was born in 1896. He is the son of the late Woizeru Shoaraga (a natural daughter of the Emperor Menelik), and of the late King Mihail, Hereditary Chief of Wollo, through whom he claimed descent from Mahomet. King Mihail was nominally converted to Christianity by order of the Emperor John. Lij Yasu succeeded to the throne on the death of his grandfather, which officially occurred in December 1913, but he assumed the reins of Government in the year 1911, when his grandfather was already a hopeless invalid. He was never crowned, as the priests said that if this happened he would never reign. He was said to be cowardly, dissipated, vain and tyrannical, but, as he was the nominee of the Emperor Menelik, he had much prestige. He had many concubines, and has at least two natural daughters and probably some sons. He flirted with his numerous Mahometan subjects. It was said that he wanted to make Abyssinia a Moslem country—the Moslems having already a considerable majority of the population. He professed Islam among the Somalis, but never openly renounced Christianity. He was deposed by proclamation of the Shoan Chiefs at Addis Ababa on the 27th September, 1916, and fled to the Danakil country. Meanwhile, his father fought his battles for him, but was defeated. After many adventures, Lij Yasu was captured by trickery and given to the care of Ras Kassa, at whose headquarters he remains a prisoner. He has become a kind of legendary hero amongst both the Christians and Mahometans; many who are dissatisfied with the present régime regard him as a "Prince Charlie." Although it is said that he is now physically incapable of governing, he is a very powerful card in the hands of Ras Kassa, who could threaten to release him if ever the Government or Ras Taffari should refuse to do what he wished. This, quite apart from his own personality, makes Ras Kassa the chief power behind the throne.

Ras Taffari.

Ras Taffari is about 36 years old. He is the son of the late Ras Makonnen, the enlightened Governor of Harar. Ras Makonnen was the grandson of Sahle Sellassie, King of Shoa, and thus a first cousin of the Emperor Menelik, over whom he exercised considerable influence for his good. He died comparatively young. Ras Taffari's wife, Waizeru Menen, is a grand-daughter of King Mikael of Wollo, but by a wife who was not the daughter of the Emperor Menelik. She is thus the step-niece of Lij Yasu. According to European reckoning Ras Taffari might be called a second cousin of the Empress Zauditou. His Highness was selected as heir to the throne and regent after the uncrowned Emperor Yij Yasu, the grandson of Menelik, was deposed at the revolution of 1916. The choice is a little hard to understand when Ras Kassa and Dejazmatch Taye are descendants of King Sahle Sellassie in the senior line, but I understand that the motive which prompted the selection, in which the Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis had the biggest say, were to find someone immediately at hand who would be both pleasing to the foreign Legations and not too powerful a personality in the country, and who could thus be kept under control of the big chiefs.

On account of his position as regent and heir to the throne, Ras Taffari is nominally, at any rate, the most important personality in the country so far as the foreign Legations are concerned. Thanks perhaps to the education which he received from the French Roman Catholic Mission at Harar, he has certain qualities seen in his domestic life and in his desire to promote education and reforms in his country, which are shared by few of his countrymen. His Highness is undoubtedly overworked, but his work would be much easier and might be greatly diminished if only he would settle questions promptly and not always think we were trying to catch him in a trap. Small questions which could be amicably settled in half an hour between two European Governments drag on in this country for years and assume quite unjustified proportions and cause continual irritation which might so easily be avoided. Belata Heroui, and on one occasion the Ras himself, referred to the difficulties which he had to encounter from his own people, but I told Belata Heroui that it was impossible to make my Government believe that His Highness was as utterly impotent, even in his own Province of Harar, as he tried to make out. If in England, I said, our Prime Minister carried no influence and no longer spoke

for the nation he would have to go. When His Highness knows himself in the wrong he will not give way. I have myself gently administered to His Highness what I told Dr. Martin was a "knock-out blow," but he refused to be knocked out. What Count Colli says is true; the difficulty is to make His Highness more afraid of the foreign Legations than he is of his own people. As things stand at present, the only Legation which is capable of bringing any real pressure to bear on the Abyssinian Government is the French, with their railway and the port of Jibuti. Anyone writing a book or a journalist or camera man for whom no Legation cares to assume any responsibility will be received with open arms by the Ras. He is certainly intelligent and enlightened up to a certain point. He sees a point quickly, but shows great lack of intelligence or common sense in the manner in which, owing to his suspicious nature, he aggrandises the smallest questions into big ones which he would almost rather die than settle without first causing unnecessary irritation. He is courteous and tolerant to foreign missionaries and mission work, and anxious to promote education amongst his people; religious and virtuous, but incapable as yet of understanding that British people at any rate say what they mean and desire straight dealings. The Ras can trust none of his own people, except perhaps Belata Heroui, and will not, or dare not, depute even the smallest matters to subordinates. Consequently he is overworked, questions are shelved or forgotten, and confusion is general everywhere.

There is no Cabinet or Parliament in this country, but, in order effectively to be able to checkmate Ras Taffari and to render him impotent, the Empress appointed a Council of Advisers of eighteen men. Their duty is to advise the Empress. To them Ras Taffari is obliged to submit any matter of any importance, both foreign and internal, and they are able to frighten him considerably more than can the representatives of foreign Powers, so that he is kept continually between the devil and the deep sea. The power of most of these advisers is entirely negative, but, by blocking Ras Taffari at every turn and successfully sowing seeds of jealousy between the Empress and the Regent, they can check every forward movement and continue indefinitely the present state of stagnation in the country. They constitute a factor with which a foreign Minister has undoubtedly to reckon and thus the following biographical notes may be useful for purposes of reference.

In addition and above this, a Crown Council of three function, with the Empress as president. The members are:—

1. Ras Taffari.
2. Ras Kassa.
3. Tsafi Tizaz Wolde Maskal, Keeper of the Seal and First Secretary of the Ethiopian Empire.

Ras Kassa.

Governor of Salali, is the great-grandson of King Sahle Silassie. His grandfather, Ras Darge, was imprisoned by King Theodore and released by Lord Napier at Magdala. He resides two days' trek from Addis Ababa. He is in charge of Lij Yasu, and so could, at any time, let him loose to take the place of Ras Taffari. He is a very devout and religious man of 46, and anxious to promote the spiritual welfare of his people. Has considerable influence with the Empress and with Ras Taffari, whom he would probably succeed if Ras Taffari should die. Represented Abyssinia at the coronation of King George V, when he was made G.C.V.O. Professes admiration for England and the English and seems to be sincerely desirous of assisting me in my task here. Has considerable charm of manner. Intelligent for an Abyssinian and can take decisions.

Tsafi Tizaz Wolde Maskal.

Privy Seal. Former secretary and treasurer of the Empress Taitu, wife of the Emperor Menelik. Appointed Privy Seal in 1914. The Portfolio of the Minister of Agriculture was given to him at the beginning of the year 1927. Apart from being the Keeper of the Imperial Seal, he was Chief Secretary of the Empire, and so had control of all the secretaries of the Government. It has now been decided that each Minister shall appoint his own secretary, who will thus be independent of Tsafi Tizaz. Besides being a member of the Crown Council, this gentleman is also President of the Council of Advisers. He is reliable, conscientious and progressive. Chief of Bulga (North-Eastern Abyssinia).

Section 2.—Council of Advisers of Eighteen Members.

President: Tsafi Tizaz Wolde Maskal.

Members:

Dejazmatch Wolde Zadic.
Dejazmatch Wondirad.
Dejazmatch Wolde Gabriel.
Dejazmatch Dallei.
Dejazmatch Katama.
Dejazmatch Mulugeta.
Fitaurari Amdei.
Fitaurari Desta Damtu.
Kantiba Nasibu.

Nagadras Zallaka.
Kanyazmatch Kifalo.
Kanyazmatch Dahnei.
Ligaba Wodafei.
Tsafi Tizaz Afawork.
Aleka Wolde Hanna.
Ato Fasika Hapta Mikael.
Azaz Gizau.

Dejazmatch Wolde Zadic (the step-father of Ras Kassa).

Was a former Minister of the Interior in the time of Lij Yasu, but during the revolution was dismissed from his office and was sent to Salali as a prisoner on parole. Owing to the influence of Ras Kassa he was pardoned, and is now appointed Minister of the Interior in the place of Bitwoded Getatcho. He is also a member of the Council of Advisers. Though somewhat timid, he seems a pleasant gentleman, and tells me that he used to come to His Majesty's Legation frequently in the time of the late Mr. Thesiger (presumably before he was a prisoner).

Dejazmatch Wondirad.

An officer of the late Ras Makonnen, father of Ras Taffari. He was made a Dejazmatch after the revolution of 1916. An intelligent and progressive officer. Adviser to Ras Taffari. Governor of Konta. A member of the Council of Advisers. Aged 65.

Dejazmatch Wolde Gabriel.

Is the Chamberlain of the Empress. An old Conservative of 68, most friendly, has quite a sense of humour, but is uneducated. I am told that he is a force to be reckoned with. He went to France in 1919 to congratulate on the victory of the Allies. Early in 1927 the Central Government, wishing to compensate him for his long services to the Crown, gave him the honorary title of Ditwoded (Beloved). Except for a special uniform and the title, he gains nothing. Is a member of the Council of Advisers.

Dejazmatch Dallei.

Former attendant of the Imperial Court. Made a Dejazmatch for good service during the revolution. A member of the Council of Advisers.

Dejazmatch Katama.

Was chief of the Mahal-Safari (Emperor Menelik's bodyguard) and was later made Likamakwas of the Emperor. During the time of Lij Yasu he was made a Fitaurari and adviser to Lij Yasu. He held office as Minister of the Interior with the present Government. Promoted to rank of Dejazmatch, and lately became Afanegus (Mouth of the King) Minister of Justice. He is a Conservative, clever and reliable. Regarded as an authority on Abyssinian law. Aged 69, member of the Council of Advisers.

Dejazmatch Mulugeta.

Minister of Finance in the time of the Emperor Menelik. Was accused of helping the Empress Taitu's party after the death of Menelik. He was dismissed by Lij Yasu and sent to Gemirra. Prevented from coming up to Addis Ababa for six years. Made a Dejazmatch (Abyssinian general) when the Empress Zauditu was crowned. He then came up to Addis Ababa and was reappointed Minister of Finance, and later on was made Minister for Foreign Affairs. When the Ministry was dissolved in 1917 he went out of office. Reappointed Minister of Finance in 1924. Governor of Sibu and member of the Council of Advisers. Aged 55. He exchanged the Ministry of Finance for that of War early in 1927. Is also official judge of the army.

Fitaurari Amdei.

A former Minister of the Interior. Dismissed from his office when the Ministry was dissolved. He was recalled by Ras Tafari last year. A great friend and adviser of Ras Tafari and member of the Council of Advisers. Lately made a Fitaurari and given the District of Baroda, south-west of Addis Ababa. Age about 50.

Fitaurari Desta Damtu.

A young man of 31. Rendered great services during the revolution. Some years ago he was sent by the Central Government on a mission to try and induce Lij Yasu to come from the lowlands and stay with Ras Seyoum. He fulfilled his mission so well that Lij Yasu was arrested and brought to Salali. He married the eldest daughter of Ras Tafari. Is a member of the Council of Advisers. Seems as anxious to make money by every possible means as is his exalted father-in-law. Lately he has tried to undersell all the merchants of Addis Ababa by obtaining special favours in regard to the duties on coffee. He has also been busy about a road from Addis Ababa to Jimma in the south-west.

Kantiba Nasibu.

Mayor and Governor of Addis Ababa, and member of the Council of Advisers. Son of Azaz Zammanuel. Educated in Menelik's School. He was made an Abyssinian consul at Asmara. He speaks Italian well and a little French. In 1921 he was appointed Mayor of Addis Ababa. Friend of Ras Tafari. He is very anxious to improve the police of the town. A friend of Europeans. Aged 33. A pleasing and friendly young man, whose wife is half Russian.

Nagadras Zallaka.

Educated in the Imperial School of Menelik. Great reader of European books. In 1917 was appointed Nagadras (head of the merchants) of Addis Ababa. In 1925 he was appointed Minister of Commerce. Is a member of the Council of Advisers. Early in 1927 he became Minister of Finance. This appointment was not popular with the friends of Ras Tafari, yet it was said to have been made with his and Ras Kassa's consent. Nagadras Zallaka is known to be a stupid man, avaricious, and not to be trusted. The Government decided not to hand over to him the Treasury of the Imperial Government, but made him merely Minister of Finance. This means that he is not trusted and will be directly under the control of Ras Tafari and Ras Kassa. He still functions as Minister of Commerce. He speaks a little French. Aged about 50.

Kanyazmatch Kifalo.

Principal judge of the Imperial High Court and member of the Council of Advisers.

Kahyazmatch Dahnei.

One of the secretaries of the Emperor Menelik. After the revolution he was appointed secretary to Tsafi Tizaz (Privy Seal) Wolde Maskal. An adviser to the Empress and member of the Council of Advisers. Anti-European, but harmless. Aged 46.

Ligaba Wodajei.

Chief attendant to the Imperial Court and member of the Council of Advisers.

Tsafi Tizaz Afawork.

Ex-keeper of the Imperial Seal in the time of Lij Yasu. Now Minister of Communications and member of the Council of Advisers.

Aleka Wolda Hanna.

A learned priest. He held many offices during Lij Yasu's time. Made chief of St. George's Church by the present Government. Aged 61. A member of the Council of Advisers.

Ato Fasika Hapta Mikael.

A grandson of Dejazmatch Garmamei. Began to study French in the Imperial School of Menelik. Ran away from Addis Ababa and attached himself to a Frenchman, who took him to Egypt and put him in a school there. After seven years he received his degree as a lawyer. Ras Tafari helped him with the expenses of his education. Was appointed Abyssinian consul at Jibuti, but he never goes there, and has now been made Minister of Public Works. Is an adviser of the Empress and a member of the Council of Advisers. Intelligent but unbalanced. Aged 39.

Azaz Gizau.

Attendant of the Imperial Court and member of the Council of Advisers.

Section 3.—Other Leading Personalities.

Ras Seyoum.

Is the natural grandson of King John. Though treated with all the deference due to his Royal descent, he is kept at Addis Ababa as a prisoner on parole and not allowed to return to his country, Tigre, owing to his having taken sides with Lij Yasu in the revolution of 1916. He strikes me as good-natured, but something of a nonentity. I am told, however, that he has some influence with the Government. He married the sister of Lij Yasu, and is father-in-law of Dejazmatch Gabre Silassie. Last year the wife of Ras Kabada Mangasha was forcibly taken away by the Government, as Ras Kabada had fallen out of favour, and Ras Seyoum was compelled to marry her—much against his will, it is said. Accompanied Ras Tafari to England in 1924, when he was made a K.B.E.

Ras Nado.

Descendant of a noble family. Was Likamakwas (an officer who personifies the Emperor in battle). He was sent by the Emperor Menelik to France to study the progress and civilisation of Europe. Was made Dejazmatch (Abyssinian general). In 1919 he was sent by the Central Government to England to congratulate King George on the victory of the Allies. From there he went on to America. In 1923 he was sent to represent Abyssinia at the League of Nations. He accompanied Ras Tafari on his visit to Europe in 1924, when he was made K.B.E. He was made Ras in 1923. He is Governor of Gorei. Aged about 61.

Dejazmatch Gabra Silassie.

Was educated in the Royal School of the Italian Government. During the Emperor Menelik's reign he was made a Dejazmatch. Governor of Adowa and Neburad. Chief over the priests of the Church of Axum. During the time of Lij Yasu he quarrelled with Ras Sebhat, and, in a fight which resulted, killed both Ras Sebhat and his sons. He ran away and stayed near Eritrean territory. After the revolution and at the coronation of the Empress Zauditu he was pardoned and came to Addis Ababa. In 1921 he was sent to Jerusalem on a mission concerning the Convent of Deir-el-Sultan. Reappointed Governor of Adowa. He was in the suite of Ras Tafari when in Europe in 1924, as a representative of the Empress, with whom he was then in high favour. Seems now to have fallen from favour as perhaps he is considered too pro-Italian. Quite an elderly gentleman, he recently married the young daughter of Ras Seyoum.

The Itchige.

Abyssinian High Priest, might be called the personal chaplain of the Empress, and through her he exercises considerable influence behind the scenes. He is pleasant to talk to, but distinctly reactionary. He is bitterly opposed to the Roman Catholic Missions, and, I think, to mission work of every sort. Has been performing the functions of Abuna since the death, in December 1926, of the Abuna Mattheos.

Bitwoded Getatcho.

Minister of the Interior until December 1926. Son of the late Ras Abata (who was a friend of the English). In 1919 he was sent to Italy by the Central Government to congratulate the King of Italy on the victory of the Allies. In 1925 he represented the Abyssinian Government at the Arms Conference at Geneva. At

the end of 1926 he was made Bitwoded (Beloved) and given the Governorships of Kaffa, Maji, Goldaya and Tsharakora. He ceased to be a member of the Council of Advisers and left for his provinces. Ras Taffari and Ras Kassa decided that he should leave Addis Ababa for the time being as he was said to intrigue with the Empress against them. He is said to have received instructions to look after the Maji frontier well and to avoid all friction with the British consul there. He is connected by marriage with the Empress. During 1925 my relations with him were not very warm. This changed, however, and before he left for his provinces we parted good friends, and he expressed his desire for the best possible relations with the new British consul at Maji. He is about 31 years of age. His children are being brought up entirely by the French Roman Catholic Mission in Addis Ababa.

Ras Hailu.

Born about 1875. Only surviving but natural son of King Takla Haimanot of Gijam and Kaffa, who was tributary to the Emperor Menelik. Grandson of Dejazmatch Tassama of Gojam. Married daughter (deceased) of Ras Mangasha Atakem and sister of the present Ras Kabada. Had by her a daughter who, after liaison with Lij Yasu, gave birth to a daughter, now aged about 12 years. Both live with Ras Hailu. Has also a son by his wife; the boy is aged about 9 years. Has many natural children.

Hereditary Governor of Gojam, which is bordered on the south and east by the Blue Nile and marches with the south-west of Lake Tsana.

Accompanied Ras Taffari to Europe in 1924 and was made K.B.E. Hates Ras Taffari and resents interference by Central Government, who mistrust him. On good terms with Ras Seyoum, with whom he might co-operate if occasion required. Has a large army and cannot be ignored. Has a passion for money and possessions; has earned the nick-name in Gojam of "Dollar Hailu." Disliked in Gojam for his extortions. Influenced entirely by self-interest. Thinks that friendship with the English may be useful to him. Appreciates the fact that the construction of the Tsana dam by the English will be profitable to him, and is, therefore, in favour of it.

Pleasant, hospitable, fat, plausible, rich, untrustworthy. An unblushing liar and beggar.

Ras Gugsa Wolye.

Born about 1876. Is known as the son of Ras Wolye, brother of Empress Taitu; probably is a natural son of Ras Wolye's wife by Emperor Menelik. Was the first and is the fourth husband of Empress Zauditou, who is natural daughter of Menelik. Has no children.

Not allowed to live with his wife, as the big chiefs do not want a Prince-Consort. Was Governor of Gondar in Menelik's time, but was dismissed when the Empress Taitu fell from power in 1910. Reappointed Governor of Gondar in 1918, and resides at Debra Tabor in Bagyendir. Borders with Sudan between Rivers Bahr-el-Salaam and Rahad. The northern and eastern shores of Lake Tsana down to its outlet are in his territory.

A religious fanatic. Herring-gutted and feckless. Hates giving judgment. Largely run by subordinates.

Fat, pleasant, stupid, poor. One of the world's parasites.

Dejazmatch Ayalewu.

Born 1885. Son of Waizero Gasasich, sister of Empress Taitu. Is a younger brother of Dejazmatch Admasu. Married Marr-Yahlu-Shal, daughter of Ras Kassa.

Governor of Kwara, Wogera, Walkait and Kaptiya in north-western Abyssinia since 1918, consequently marches with the Sudan. Resides at Davat in Woger. His territory touches the west of Lake Tsana. Firm, keen soldier, and turns out a fairly well drilled force. Dreaded by evil-doers. Intelligent and pleasant. On good terms with the Empress and Ras Taffari, but despises his first cousin and neighbour, the Empress's husband, Ras Gugsa Wolye, Governor of Gondar, as being a religious fanatic and spiritless creature. Wants to see the world.

Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan.

Born about 1850. Of Arab (Rikabi) origin from Kassala Province in the Sudan. Chief of Kouma District near Beni Shangul. A leading slave raider. Most intelligent and dominant. Sits on fence between Sudan and Abyssinia. His wife (Sitt Amna) lives on the Sudan side of the border.

Dejazmatch Marid.

A former Chamberlain in the Palace in the time of Lij Yasu. Made a Dejazmatch and given the Province of Gofa. His son married a daughter of Ras Taffari by a former marriage. It is said that it was his soldiers who raided the natives on the southern frontier, about which the Abyssinian Commission recently left to investigate. Aged about 54.

Dejazmatch Balcha.

Governor of Sidamo and chief of a section of Menelik's soldiers (called Barud-bet). He is a Gouragi and was taken as a prisoner of war by Menelik. A eunuch. A rival of the late Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis. Was Governor of Addis Ababa in 1916. Strong character.

Fitaurari Ayella.

A trusted soldier of the late Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis, and was made his representative in Boran and lately was nominated Governor of that area. A good administrator and greatly praised by His Majesty's consul at Mega. Aged about 48.

Ras Gugsa Araya.

Natural grandson of the Emperor John of Abyssinia. He is Governor of the Province Makale, which lies to the north-east and borders on Eritrea. Intelligent and dignified. Is not supposed to have much love for Ras Taffari. Married Ras Taffari's niece, a daughter of Dejazmatch Ilma.

Ras Kabada Mangasha.

Son of Ras Mangasha Atikim, who, after death of King Tekla-Haimanot, was Governor of Gojam. Formerly Governor of Wollamo and other provinces. He was made "Ras" during the revolution and was given the Governorship of Wollo. Was removed thence for trading in slaves and Wollo was given to Ras Taffari. About a year ago he was made Governor of Kaffa and Maji, but he refused this appointment. His wife, Woizero Atchada, is the grand-daughter of Ras Darge. Her father was Dejazmatch Asfou, brother of Ras Kassa's mother. Woizero Atchada was forced to divorce Ras Kabada a year ago and she married Ras Seyoum. She is a Princess in her own right. Ras Kabada is not to be trusted. Aged about 48.

Dejazmatch Beru Hapta Mariam.

Son of the late Dejazmatch Haile Mariam, elder brother of Ras Taffari's father, Ras Makonnen. Was a favourite of the Emperor Menelik and brought up in the Palace and made Likamakwas (which means one who personifies the Emperor in battle). After the revolution he was made a Dejazmatch and given the Governorship of Sayo in Western Abyssinia, which he still holds. He recently came to Addis Ababa for reasons of ill-health. His district is thought to be rich in platinum and gold. He is said to be very hostile to foreigners and to Ras Taffari. Strong character and headstrong. Supporter of slave trade. Aged about 42.

Dejazmatch Imaru.

The Deputy Governor of Harar, a cousin of Ras Taffari, is a man of importance to us as the Province of Harar borders on Somaliland and frontier questions continually arise. He speaks some French, is a model of domestic virtue, pleasant, friendly, and, for an Abyssinian, honest. Though we trust him, the Ras does not, and appoints under him subordinates to spy on him to see that he shall have less power in Harar than Ras Taffari is allowed to have in Abyssinia.

Azaz Dagafei.

Born in Ankobar. Was Chief of Transport during the Emperor Menelik's reign. At the time of the coronation of the Empress Zauditou he was appointed Minister of Agriculture by Ras Taffari. Has now been appointed Wahni Azaz at Ankobar, which means Governor of that place and also of the prisons there. He is no longer a member of the Council of Advisers.

Section 4.—*Lesser Lights.**Ato Berhana Marcos.*

Among the lesser lights should be mentioned the Foreign Secretary of the Government, Ato Berhana Marcos, Director of Posts and Telegraphs and late interpreter of the French Railway. Has been appointed successor to the former Foreign Secretary of the Government, Ato Sahle Sadalou, who has been compelled to relinquish his duties owing to ill-health. Possessing similar abilities and educated in the same school as Ato Sahle Sadalou, he seems to perform the functions of his rather thankless office with a little more character and intelligence. He is a Roman Catholic and speaks French fluently.

Belata Heroui.

Was at one time judge of the special court, but, as he gave too many decisions against his own people, his health began to suffer seriously, and had he not relinquished the post and gone abroad, the grave might have claimed him before now. He represented Abyssinia at the General Assembly of the League of Nations in 1925. He is, with Ras Kassa and Dr. Martin, one of the very few Abyssinians who know anything about England and the English, and who realise the importance, from an Abyssinian point of view, of maintaining friendly relations between the two countries. He visited England and America officially with Ras Nado in 1919, when he was made an O.B.E. Again in 1924, when he was made a C.B.E., he accompanied Ras Tafari to England and was present at his discussions with the Prime Minister. He has also paid private visits to England. His sons were educated at the Victoria College at Alexandria, and one is now at Cambridge. He is a devoutly religious man, most friendly to all the Protestant missionaries, whom he lays himself out to help. He has a great influence for good with Ras Tafari, and, I am told, the Ras listens to him more than to anyone else. He is, I believe, anxious to help me with my difficulties, and he is, with Ras Kassa and Dr. Martin, my chief means of influence in this country.

Dr. Martin.

Known in Abyssinia as Dr. Workineh, was abandoned at Magdala in 1868 and taken by a British missionary to India, where he was adopted, educated and given the name of Martin. He practised medicine in Burma and married an English wife. She died, and his second wife is a lady of great position in this country and a near relation of Woizero Manen, wife of Ras Tafari. Dr. Martin is now in charge of Ras Tafari's boys' school and of the sulphur baths. Being able to see things from an English point of view, he can explain matters concerning England to Ras Tafari. Until the summer of 1926 he was in high favour with Ras Tafari, who used to consult him on political questions regarding England. He published, however, a somewhat outspoken article against slavery in Abyssinia, and was forced by Ras Tafari to publish a most humiliating recantation the following week. He thus lost favour both with the Abyssinians and the Europeans. He is anxious for the increase of British influence in Abyssinia. He always bewails the fact that British institutions and ideals are unknown in this country, where, though the need is very great, there are neither British hospitals, schools nor missions.

Kantiba Gabru.

Was the Mayor of Gondar and owns a little land in the neighbourhood of Lake Tsana. Speaks German and English quite well. Went to England with missions for King Edward's coronation in 1902, to congratulate King George on the Allied victory in 1911, and again with Ras Tafari in 1924. Represented Abyssinia at the Assembly of the League of Nations in September 1926.

A devoutly religious old gentleman, who makes an honest impression and appears anxious to help me and to promote good relations between Great Britain and Abyssinia. Seems to be intelligent, and professes now to favour our Tsana project. Has the Coronation Medal and O.B.E.

Ligaba Wodajei.

Chief of the Chamberlains in the Empress's Palace. Accompanied Ras Tafari to England in 1924. Lately appointed Chief of Staff (Ligaba) of the army under the Minister of War.

De Bellefonds, Count Linant.

Legal adviser to the Abyssinian Government for about the last seven years. Born in Egypt about forty years ago of a French father and Syrian mother. Formerly had great influence with Ras Tafari, but has latterly fallen from favour and is said to be retiring at the end of the year in favour of the Swiss jurist, M. Auberson. Intelligent, talks a little English. Not to be trusted. Is supposed to add to his slender salary by the taking of "baksheesh," and appearances would tend to confirm this. Was thought by my predecessor to have been implicated in the intrigue to get rid of him, but this he denied on his word of honour. Count Colli refused to receive him at the Italian Legation, but he and his wife are accepted both by M. Cora and myself at our respective Legations on the usual social footing. He is considered to have injured his position with Ras Tafari by being too intimate with the French Legation.

M. Auberson.

A Swiss jurist, arrived here with his wife last November to act as an adviser on foreign laws to the special court. He appeared to be very sure of himself, but is reported to have been somewhat disillusioned on arrival. It was a long time before he called upon the foreign Legations, and he has let me know privately that he considers it better in his own interests that he should keep away and only mix with Abyssinians. His first interview with my French colleague was not friendly. His great confidence and assumption of everything Abyssinian irritated M. Gausson, whose knowledge, after over three years' experience, was possibly greater. M. Auberson has not always stuck strictly to his functions at the special court, and his actions have called forth protests from the German and Italian consuls. He is, I believe, hoping to succeed M. de Bellefonds as legal adviser to the Abyssinian Government, and my colleagues and I feel that with that end in view he is losing no opportunity of playing up to the Abyssinians, whose side he may be relied on to take in any difference which may arise with a foreign Legation. His Majesty's consul, however, expresses the following opinion: "Although M. Auberson's self-interest may give him a bias in favour of the Abyssinians, I must say that I have found his European mentality an assistance at the special court and have personally been on quite cordial terms with him."

M. Auberson is, I believe, 30 years of age.

[J 1749/202/1]

No. 97.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 150. Confidential.)

Addis Ababa, May 25, 1927.

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 66 of the 29th ultimo and to previous correspondence respecting the appointment of a new Abuna, I learn that Dejazmach Wolde Tsadik was to have started at the head of a special mission to Alexandria last April for the purpose of asking the Patriarch for a new Abuna, but that the whole matter has been delayed on account of the request of the Abyssinian Government that the Patriarch should give to the new Abuna power to consecrate Abyssinian bishops. I understand that the Abyssinians wish to have twelve bishops, including the Abuna, and these bishops are to be appointed to the various provinces of the Empire. Evidently the Patriarch and his advisers realise that this is a new departure entailing the eventual independence of the Abyssinian Church, and hence their hesitation in replying.

2. The Dejazmach, who will represent the Abyssinian Government, is to be accompanied by eight Abyssinian priests who will act as his advisers, and it is even possible that the Patriarch may be asked to consecrate some of these priests as bishops before they leave Alexandria.

3. In conversation with me to-day, the Dejazmach confirmed most of the above. In the reign of the Emperor John, he said, there had been four Coptic bishops in Abyssinia, of whom the one in Tigre was an archbishop, who had power to consecrate Abyssinian bishops, but who never did so. This power had eventually devolved upon the late Abuna Mattheos at Addis Ababa, after the other three bishops had died, but the late Abuna had never exercised it. The Dejazmach was much preoccupied with the responsibilities of the task before him. He had heard that

formerly in England our bishops had been consecrated in Rome, and he enquired as to the system in England since the Reformation. The information reaching him regarding the conditions in the Coptic Church in Egypt did not inspire him with much hope of being able to find the right man, and he had not a good word to say for the late Abuna Mattheos. The Dejazmach was not very satisfied as to the present state of the Abyssinian Church, where priests, he said, were consecrated on payment of a sum of money. This he compared to the sale of Papal indulgences in the days of Martin Luther. He asked my private opinion as to the course which the Abyssinians should pursue in the circumstances, an opinion which I did not feel myself competent to express.

4. To my mind it is deplorable that the recent indiscretions of Bishop Gwynne should now have rendered it impossible for the Dejazmach to seek the bishop's help and advice, as he might otherwise have done, at this most critical of moments in the history of the Abyssinian Church (see paragraph 2 of my telegram No. 59 of the 26th April). The Church of England has thus lost an opportunity of helping the Abyssinian Church, a fact which I cannot too greatly regret. Rumour has it that the mission may now ask the assistance of the Greek Church in the event of difficulties with the Patriarch in connection with the consecration of the bishops.

5. The Dejazmach, who is the step-father of Ras Kassa, was formerly Minister of the Interior in the time of Lij Yasu. During the revolution he was dismissed from office, but thanks to the influence of Ras Kassa he has now been reinstated in his old position. He is also one of the eighteen members of the Council of Advisers. He seems a pleasant old gentleman and anxious to be friendly.

I am forwarding a copy of this despatch to Cairo.

I have, &c.
C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 1753/883/1]

No. 98.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 156.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, May 27, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 17 of the 12th January last, I have the honour to report that the Duke of the Abruzzi reached Addis Ababa on the 18th instant and left on the 25th. The visit was purely complimentary to return that paid by Ras Taffari to Italy in 1924. His Royal Highness was accompanied by the following gentlemen:—

Signor Gasparini, Governor of Eritrea.
Signor Guariglia, Minister employed at the Italian Foreign Office.
Duca di Fragnito, Master of Ceremonies to the King of Italy.
Major Malusardi, aide-de-camp to the King of Italy.
Baron de Ciutiis, vice-consul.
Naval Lieutenant Count F. Capponi, aide-de-camp to His Royal Highness.
Captain Ornatti, R.I.N., of H.I.M.S. "Venezia."
Lieutenant-Colonel Boselli.
Captain de Maria.
Cavalier Rava, secretary to the Governor of Eritrea.

The Abyssinians attached to His Royal Highness were the Fitaurari Desta Damtu, Ras Taffari's son-in-law, and Belata Herui, who is officially styled "Conseiller de l'Empire."

2. I understand that His Royal Highness was well received by the French authorities at Jibuti, whence a warship and an aeroplane were sent out to greet him. He came to Addis Ababa by special train and received a ceremonious welcome at Dire Dawa from the Deputy Governor of Harrar, Dejaz Imaru.

3. Ras Taffari and a large escort, consisting of both cavalry and infantry, awaited His Royal Highness at the station at Addis Ababa, whence Ras Taffari and the Duke drove in procession through the town to the Empress's Palace. The procession of cars was preceded and followed by a mounted guard of honour, in red, white and blue uniforms, as well as by Ras Taffari's bodyguard in khaki. The car in which His Royal Highness and Ras Taffari were seated was immediately followed by a mounted escort of sixteen Italian Askars from Eritrea, wearing Italian uniforms. After the reception by the Empress, His Royal Highness was escorted by Ras Taffari

to his own palace, where most of the party stayed. Ras Taffari had hurriedly built a new house in the same compound, where he himself stayed and entertained during the Royal visit. The rest of the suite, who could not be accommodated in Ras Taffari's palace, stayed at the Italian Legation.

4. On the morning of the 19th His Royal Highness received the heads of the Diplomatic Missions and was most gracious. Subsequently he visited the Mausoleum for the Emperor Menelik and the Emperor Menelik's school (the teachers of which, who are Egyptians, are suing the Government for non-fulfilment of contract!). Luncheon was offered at the Imperial Palace and was attended by the Abyssinian chiefs, but not by the Diplomatic Corps. A visit was then paid to the Emperor Menelik Hospital of which a French doctor is in charge, and after that a visit was paid to the Italian Legation.

5. On Friday, the 20th May, a visit was paid to the Taffari Makonnen Hospital, in charge of a Swedish doctor and Swedish nurses, to Ras Taffari's school, of which Dr. Martin is in charge, and in the evening a dinner was offered by Ras Taffari to His Royal Highness and the Abyssinian chiefs.

6. On Saturday, the 21st May, a large parade was held and troops were massed in the capital from the Harrar Province, from Sidamo, Dejazmach Balacha's country, and from Ras Kassa's country, though none appear to have been brought from Cojjam or Tigre. The parade was arranged to begin at 9 o'clock and end at 12 o'clock, and the Diplomatic Corps were invited to be present. Just before 8 o'clock in the morning messages were hurriedly sent round to heads of missions inviting them to be present at 8 o'clock, as it had been decided to begin at that early hour owing to the large numbers of troops which were to parade. We arrived at about a quarter to 9. By 1 o'clock the parade showed no signs of finishing, and the Duke of the Abruzzi and his suite, being thoroughly tired, asked leave to retire, as the Italian Minister was giving a luncheon party in their honour. At 1.30 those of the Diplomatic Corps, including the doyen and myself, who had considered it polite towards Ras Taffari to remain as long as he did, were told that we could retire, and Ras Taffari himself followed us about ten minutes later, arriving somewhat late for the luncheon party at the Italian Legation, which had been arranged for 1 o'clock and lasted until 4! I understand that the parade finished at about 4.30. No doubt the Italians were duly impressed! Ras Taffari's own bodyguard certainly looked well in their British uniforms, and made some attempt at marching together. According to an Abyssinian officer, at least 250,000 men filed past. According to the Foreign Secretary, 110,000 men had been counted. Ras Taffari told me himself, however, that there were not more than 80,000, and this figure corresponds to the calculation which the Duke of the Abruzzi told me he had himself made. That evening Ras Taffari offered a banquet, to which the Diplomatic Corps and the big chiefs were invited.

7. On Sunday, the 22nd May, after service at the Roman Catholic Church, the Duke was taken on an excursion by motor car to Addis Alem, a road having been hurriedly constructed for the purpose. It was intended that His Royal Highness and his suite should stop the night at one of the imperial houses on the way back, hastily prepared for the occasion. His Royal Highness, however, and his suite, being thoroughly tired, wisely returned in the course of the afternoon.

8. On Monday, the 23rd May, further visits had to be paid to churches and tombs, and in the evening a dinner, followed by a dance, was offered to the Royal party by the Mayor and Governor of Addis Ababa, to which the Diplomatic Corps and the big chiefs were invited. A reception was subsequently given to the leading European and Abyssinian residents. A gold sword of honour was presented by the mayor to His Royal Highness on that occasion and very friendly speeches were exchanged.

9. On Tuesday, the 24th May, the summer race meeting was held. The prizes were presented by His Royal Highness, who also gave a fine cup to the owner of the winner of the hurdle race, which was the Empress. The Empress then gave a luncheon party, to which the Diplomatic Corps, the big Abyssinian chiefs and certain Abyssinian ladies were invited. Contrary to custom, Her Majesty descended from her throne and seated herself at the table, with the Duke of the Abruzzi on her right and Ras Taffari on her left. Tea was offered that afternoon at the Italian Legation to the Royal party, at which the Empress herself and Ras Taffari were present. M. Cora had intended offering a banquet that evening. This had to be abandoned, however, as the Royal party were greatly fatigued by the altitude. Instead, they were entertained at dinner privately by Ras Taffari. The following morning the

Duke of the Abruzzi left by special train for Jibuti. Ras Taffari, Ras Kassa and the leading chiefs as well as the Diplomatic Corps were present at the station to bid His Royal Highness farewell.

10. My Italian colleague tells me that he is greatly pleased with the result of the visit. Everything, he considers, went off satisfactorily, and the speeches exchanged, especially on the last evening, were of the most friendly nature. Ras Taffari said that now all misunderstandings had been removed, and he accentuated his great desire for friendly relations with Italy. Decorations were, of course, exchanged on both sides. As already reported, an Isotto Fraschini car for the Empress and a tank for Ras Taffari were brought by the Duke. His Royal Highness, before he left, was presented with a large pair of elephant's tusks and suitable presents were given to all his suite. In addition to this, a special envoy is to be sent to Italy to convey further presents, which M. Cora imagines will consist of a great deal of Abyssinian gold. So pleased was His Royal Highness with the reception he received that he is returning straight to Italy to report to the King, instead of proceeding to Italian Somaliland, which it had been his intention to do.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 1756/22/1]

No. 99.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 159. Secret.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, May 31, 1927.

I LEARN from a secret source, the accuracy of which I am not as yet in a position to check, that the political situation at Addis Ababa is at present somewhat uncertain. According to the report, the Empress, Ras Kassa and the Privy Seal (Tsañafi Tiizaa Wolda Maskal) are working together and would like to get rid of Ras Taffari. Lij Yasu might be their nominee for the Regency; more probably, Ras Kassa would use the name of Lij Yasu as a means of obtaining the Regency for himself. The Privy Seal is said to be questioning the disposal by Ras Taffari of the large customs receipts recorded for 1925.

2. Ras Taffari, who has a network of spies, is said to have few loyal supporters other than Bilata Heruy and the younger men who have been educated by Europeans.

3. A third party, the informant states, consists of Dejazmatch Mulugeta, the recently appointed Minister for War, and lesser officials who would like to abolish the post of Regent in order to hold power themselves as Ministers under the Empress.

4. It may be that Ras Taffari's cunning will enable him to get the best of his opponents. I am told that he has said that the troops who have been brought to Addis Ababa for the visit of the Duke of the Abruzzi should return to their districts but they are not being moved at present. Ras Taffari will certainly not allow himself to be deprived of the Regency without a struggle, and I gather that his enemies hesitate at the prospects of civil disturbance.

5. Ras Kassa tells me that he is escorting the Empress to-day to Debra Libanos, to the north of Addis Ababa, close to Fiche, the headquarters of his province Silala. There is a venerated church and sacred waters at Debra Libanos, and the Empress is going to worship there and to be absent with Ras Kassa for about a week. From a secret source, quite independent of that mentioned in the previous paragraphs, I learn that, during the Empress's stay at Debra Libanos, Lij Yasu will be brought from Fiche to see her. She is said to be haunted with the desire to see her nephew again, and he has asked that Ras Taffari should not be present. It has been intimated to Ras Taffari that he is to remain behind at Addis Ababa.

6. A curious side-light is thrown on the above story, if the information given me last night by an American who has just come from Dire Daoua can be substantiated. According to this gentleman, the "Gras" rifles mentioned in my despatch No. 143 of the 21st instant were, for the most part, side-tracked at Dire Daoua and sent to Harrar by order of Ras Taffari. Only a small percentage are said to have reached Addis Ababa, Ras Taffari preferring to send them to his own province. My informant understood that there were cartridges with the rifles, but that the rifles were very old and could be of little use.

7. My Italian colleague is inclined to be sceptical about the stories circulating regarding the differences between Ras Taffari and Ras Kassa. Certainly, so far as

can judge, they seem to repeat to one another what I say to each, and Ras Taffari has kept Ras Kassa informed about the Tsana question (my despatch No. 160 of the 30th May). Commendatore Cora thinks that for the Empress to see Lij Yasu would be too great a blow for Ras Taffari to put up with, and that if anything of the kind had really been mooted, Ras Taffari would never have consented to remain behind at Addis Ababa. During and just before the visit of the Duke of the Abruzzi, the wildest rumours reached my Italian colleague regarding the internal situation which, if he had believed, he would certainly have had to prevent His Royal Highness from coming. He tells me that Ras Gugsa Araya, a grandson of the Emperor John and the Governor of the province to the north-east of Abyssinia bordering on Eritrea, who has been in Addis Ababa attending the festivities given in honour of the Duke of the Abruzzi and whose wife is a niece of Ras Taffari, has now sent to ask for leave to return to his country through Eritrea, as he fears there is going to be a revolution here, and in that case he would like to remain in Eritrea. Commendatore Cora has not taken this request very seriously. I gather that Ras Gugsa Araya is not in favour with the Italians.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch by safe opportunity to Khartum and Cairo.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[16460]

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CHAPTER IV.—RAIDS.

[J 114/114/1]

No. 100.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 17.)

Sir,

Downing Street, January 15, 1927.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd December, and to request you to inform Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain that a telegram has been sent to the Governor of Kenya regarding the appointment of an officer acquainted with the facts of the Galabba raid of September 1925 to take the place of Captain A. W. Hodson, C.M.G., at the enquiry into this raid which is to be held at Gardula. A copy of this telegram is enclosed herewith for Sir Austen Chamberlain's information.

2. With reference to paragraph 2 (a) of the despatch of the 23rd October from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa, a copy of which was enclosed with your letter of the 22nd November, I am to explain that it was not, as Mr. Maclean has inferred, the Galabba raid to which the statement of compensation enclosed in this Department's letter of the 22nd September, 1926, related.

3. The items of compensation set out in the statement referred to the Gurreh (Boran) and Aulihan raids, which are dealt with in the two succeeding paragraphs of Mr. Maclean's despatch above mentioned, and as to which a separate letter is being addressed to you. The statement was given an incorrect heading in the course of drafting in this Department, and I am to express regret for any inconvenience which may have been caused by the error.

I am, &c.
(For the Under-Secretary of State),
HAROLD P. ALLEN.

Enclosure in No. 100.

*Telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor of Kenya.**December 31, 1926.*

YOUR despatch 4th May.

Understand you telegraphed to Addis Ababa 20th October officer acquainted with Galabba raid not available and suggested that Hodson on return from leave should represent Kenya at proposed joint investigation Gardula. Hodson now not available in view of his appointment to Falkland Islands, and Foreign Office trust you can now detail Kenya officer acquainted with raid. Please inform Addis Ababa direct.—AMERY.

[J 115/114/1]

No. 101.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received January 17.)

Sir,

Downing Street, January 15, 1927.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd November, 1926, transmitting a copy of a despatch of the 23rd October from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa regarding certain Abyssinian raids into Kenya.

2. As regards the Gurreh (Boran) raid, it is noted from paragraph 3 (b) of Mr. Maclean's despatch referred to above, and from the enclosure to your letter of the 3rd December, that the Fitaurari Wolde Gabriel and other officers accused in connection with this raid have arrived at Addis Ababa for examination, and that Mr. Maclean is making every effort to expedite this enquiry.

3. As regards the Aulihan raids, Mr. Amery concurs in the suggestion made in paragraph 2 [? 4] (c) of Mr. Maclean's despatch of the 23rd October, that Mr. Maclean should propose to Ras Tafari that the Ras should enquire into this raid through his own feudal subordinates.

4. With regard to paragraph 2 of your letter under reference as to the compensation claimed by the Government of Kenya, it would appear that the number of deaths in the Aulihan raids of the 11th, 17th and 31st March was correctly given as ten in all (i.e., six Gurreh, two police and two women) in the letter of the 7th April from the Acting District Commissioner, Mandera, to the Acting Senior Commissioner, Northern Frontier Province. I am, however, to explain that, when the schedule of compensation enclosed with the letter from this Department of the 22nd September was being drawn up, it was pointed out to the Governor of Kenya that in his despatch of the 15th May, 1926 (a copy of which was enclosed with the letter from this Department of the 24th June) the death of two other police askaris was reported, and he was asked by telegram what amendment, if any, should be made to the claim on this account. The schedule as actually transmitted to the Foreign Office was drawn up in accordance with the Governor's reply (with the exception of the heading, which by an oversight referred to the Galabba raid in the vicinity of Lake Rudolf in September 1925, as to which a separate letter is being sent to you), and it would appear that, owing to the action taken by this Department, it includes the compensation demanded in respect of both the Gurreh (Boran) and Aulihan raids, i.e., those referred to in paragraphs 3 (b) and 2 [? 4] (c) of Mr. Maclean's despatch. In view, however, of Mr. Maclean's request that the details of the compensation claimed in connection with each raid should be specified with all possible precision, the Governor has been requested by telegram to report in detail by despatch the compensation demanded in respect of each of the raids mentioned. A copy of this telegram is enclosed herewith for Sir Austen Chamberlain's information. When the Governor's reply is received, new schedules of the compensation claimed in respect of each raid will be submitted.

5. A regards paragraph 6 of Mr. Maclean's despatch, Mr. Amery presumes that that officer will use his discretion as to the opportune moment for presenting to the Abyssinian Government the claim in respect of each particular raid when the revised claims have been forwarded to him.

I am, &c.
(For the Under-Secretary of State),
HAROLD T. ALLEN.

Enclosure in No. 101.

*Telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor of Kenya.**December 21, 1926.*

YOUR telegram of 16th September.

His Majesty's Minister, Addis Ababa, requests compensation demanded should be specified according to particular raids. Presume that schedule of compensation enclosed with my despatch 8th October which was compiled from your telegram 3rd September your telegram 16th September covers raids referred to in your despatch 15th May and also raids referred to in your despatch 24th June. Regret this schedule was incorrectly headed as relating to Galabba raid; error is being corrected. Please send by early mail separate schedules of compensation claimed in respect of raids referred to in your despatch 15th May your despatch 24th June.—AMERY.

[J 115/114/1]

No. 102.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).(No. 24.)
Sir,*Foreign Office, January 29, 1927.*

WITH reference to Mr. Maclean's despatch No. 213 of the 31st October regarding Abyssinian raids into Kenya, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a further letter on this subject from the Colonial Office.*

2. It appears from this letter that the schedule enclosed in my despatch No. 330 of the 29th September related both to the "Gurreh" (Boran) raid of February last (item 5) and to the Aulihan raids of the 11th to 31st March (items 1 to 4 inclusive). As you will see from my despatch No. 219 of the 29th June last, at first only two

* No. 101.

[16460]

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policemen were reported as having lost their lives in the Gurreh raid; subsequently, as implied in the third sentence of paragraph 4 of the enclosed Colonial Office letter, the Governor reported a third death; this accounts for the three policemen mentioned in item 5 of the schedule. The title of item 1 of the schedule, "Tribesmen and Women . . .," may perhaps have appeared misleading, as the two policemen who lost their lives on the 31st March were included with the civilians.

3. This schedule, you will see, is now to be replaced by others, which the Governor of Kenya has been instructed to furnish. I leave to your discretion the choice of opportunity of presenting these when they are received.

4. Confusion such as that which has arisen in the present instance is less likely to occur in the future if such questions form the subject of direct communication between you and the Governor. I am prepared to leave you wide discretion in the matter, and it will be generally sufficient if you furnish me with copies of essential documents, such as notes to the Abyssinian Government, only referring to me when you are in doubt as to some political issue. I am suggesting in a letter, of which I enclose a copy,* that the Colonial Office should allow the Governor of Kenya to use his discretion to a similar extent.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 115/114/1]

No. 103.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 31, 1927.

WITH reference to your letter of the 15th instant regarding Abyssinian raids into Kenya, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to request you to lay before Mr. Secretary Amery the accompanying copy of a despatch† on this subject which he has addressed to His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.

2. Sir Austen Chamberlain hopes that Mr. Amery will see his way to allow the Governor of Kenya some measure of discretionary power, so as to enable his Excellency in future to arrange direct with Mr. Bentinck in regard to the presentation to the Abyssinian Government of such claims as he may desire to put forward, and the disposal of any sums which it may be possible to recover.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 332/114/1]

No. 104.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 12.)

Sir,

Downing Street, February 11, 1927.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st January, transmitting a copy of a despatch which has been addressed to His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa regarding certain recent raids by Abyssinians into Kenya.

2. With regard to paragraph 2 of the despatch enclosed with your letter, Mr. Amery thinks it unnecessary further to discuss the terms of the schedule of compensation which was enclosed with the letter from this Department of the 22nd September last, in view of the fact that the Governor of Kenya has now been asked to furnish separate schedules of compensation demanded in respect of each of the raids in question. I am, however, to observe that the statement in the last sentence of that paragraph that the two policemen who lost their lives on the 31st March were included with the civilians is not, in point of fact, correct, the figures in the schedule having been based upon a telegram from the Governor of the 16th September, in which it was clearly stated that claims should be made in respect of eight Gurreh men killed and three police killed.

3. As regards paragraph 2 of your letter, Mr. Amery concurs with Sir Austen Chamberlain in thinking that, when in any case it has been decided to demand compensation from the Abyssinian Government in respect of damage done by raiders

* No. 103.

† No. 102.

from Abyssinian territory, the details of the compensation demanded should be left for arrangement direct between the Government of Kenya and His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa. He assumes, however, that this will not affect the present procedure whereby, when the Governor of Kenya is of opinion that compensation should be claimed from the Abyssinian Government in respect of a raid, he reports to this effect, with a statement of the facts, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in the first instance, with a view to His Majesty's Government considering the question whether a claim shall be presented.

4. Copies of your letter and its enclosure, and of this reply, are being communicated to the Acting Governor of Kenya for his information.

I am, &c.

(For the Under-Secretary of State).

HAROLD P. ALLEN.

[J 332/114/1]

No. 105.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 17, 1927.

WITH reference to your letter of the 11th instant, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to state that he notes with satisfaction that Mr. Secretary Amery concurs in the opinion that details of claims to be presented to the Abyssinian Government in respect of raids into Kenya should be settled by direct correspondence between the Governor and His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.

2. Before instructions in this sense are issued to Mr. Bentinck, I am to suggest that a slight extension of the discretionary powers conferred on these officers might usefully be considered. As Mr. Amery is aware, the Minister at Addis Ababa has in the past used his discretion as to lodging protests with the Abyssinian Government without reference to this Department on receipt of reports of raids from the Government of Kenya. By the recent correspondence it has been agreed that if a claim for damages is to be preferred, details shall be settled by direct correspondence between Addis Ababa and Nairobi. In these circumstances it would obviate correspondence and delay if the Governor of Kenya were authorised to forward claims direct to the Minister and the Minister to present them without prior reference to London by either officer. Although until recently no claim for monetary compensation has been suggested for many years, Sir Austen Chamberlain is prepared to leave to Mr. Bentinck, who will naturally give due weight to political considerations, to decide on his own responsibility whether to present any reasonable claim which the Kenya Government may put forward. Under such an arrangement reference would only be made to the Secretaries of State if the Minister and the Governor disagreed as to the advisability of presenting a claim in any given instance.

3. I am to enquire whether Mr. Amery concurs in the above suggestion, in which case the necessary instructions will be sent to Mr. Bentinck.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 428/22/1]

No. 106.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 24, 1927.

WITH reference to the letter from this Department of the 22nd November last, regarding Abyssinian raids, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to request you to inform Mr. Secretary Amery that, according to a recent despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa, Ras Tafari is appointing a commission to proceed to the Boran country to investigate, in conjunction with His Majesty's consul at Mega, the various raids of which the Government of Kenya have had cause to complain.

2. Mr. Amery will recall that the country from which raids have most frequently emanated in the past was under the jurisdiction of the late Minister for War, the Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis. These provinces are apparently unlikely to be

assigned to anyone else for about a year, but, when this happens, it will be for the Central Government to appoint the various Governors. Meanwhile, Ras Taffari, in Mr. Bentinck's opinion, seems to be most anxious to avoid all cause for friction with His Majesty's Government and their colonial representatives.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 492/224/1]

No. 107.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 28.)

(No. 34.)
Sir,

Addis Ababa, February 1, 1927.

WITH reference to paragraph 73A of my annual report for 1925, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note which I handed to-day to Ras Taffari. I took the opportunity to remind him that a donation of 200 dollars in respect of each man murdered cannot be considered as a final settlement of a murder case. As I have already told His Highness, I cannot unfortunately learn of a single case in which an Abyssinian has been punished for murdering a British subject. When Mr. Zaphiro recently drew the attention of Ras Taffari's Foreign Secretary to these cases, the latter said that the murderers were being looked for, but could not be found. As we know who the murderers probably are in two cases and as we also know the names of the witnesses in these cases, the Secretary's remark cannot be taken seriously.

2. I think, Sir, that it would strengthen my hands if I could prove to Ras Taffari that you are interested in these matters and that you have called upon me to report what steps the Government have taken to find the murderers and bring them to justice. I do not think these cases should be allowed to be forgotten, for, as I told His Highness, it will be a bad precedent if every time a British subject is murdered the murderer should go unpunished and the Abyssinian Government pay compensation to the victims' families.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 107.

Mr. Bentinck to Ras Taffari.

Your Imperial Highness,

Addis Ababa, January 28, 1927.

YOU will remember that in the early part of last year I wrote and spoke to your Imperial Highness on several occasions about (1) the murder of an Indian barber, named Noor Mohamed Ismael, on the night of the 18th November, 1925, by an Abyssinian, Zabanya, until then employed by the Imperial Club; (2) the murder, in the summer of 1924, of two British Somalis near Hawash Station; and (3) the case of the wife of a British Arab murdered near Harrar in the year 1923.

In case (3) a gift of 200 dollars was paid by the Abyssinian Government to the husband robbed of his wife and of one eye, but the murderer was never brought to justice (see my note dated the 15th July, 1925).

In case (2) a sum of 400 dollars was "given by the Ethiopian Government as a help and contribution to the relatives of the murdered men" during my absence on leave last summer.

In case (1) your Imperial Highness paid a sum of 200 dollars early in June as "compensation" from the Ethiopian Government for the relatives of the murdered man.

When your Imperial Highness agreed to make this last-named payment, I pointed out that, whilst I was glad to forward this sum of money to the murdered man's father at Aden, it was a bad precedent if people who murdered British subjects in Abyssinia should be allowed to escape unpunished. Your Imperial Highness said that you were still seeking the murderer. You would, you said, try to find his family and extract blood-money from them. If you succeeded, the blood-money would be paid to the relatives of the deceased in addition to the gift from the Abyssinian Government, which was a separate matter.

May I remind your Imperial Highness that, although the above conversation took place early in June 1926, I have not yet heard if the murderer, whose identity was well known in Addis Ababa, has been found and punished?

As regards case (2), I regret to find that, although in his letter to your Imperial Highness dated the 27th July, 1926, Mr. Maclean was able to supply full particulars regarding the murderers and the witnesses, I have not yet heard whether any steps have been taken to bring the murderers to justice. I tried to avoid troubling your Imperial Highness further in this matter and directed my secretary to write to Ato Sahle Sadalou to remind him about it. This Mr. Dobinson did on the 9th December and again on the 8th January, but as I have not yet heard what action, if any, has been taken in the matter, I am obliged to trouble your Imperial Highness again.

Your Imperial Highness will realise that my Government will be surprised to learn that none of these murderers have as yet been brought to justice, and I should be glad if you could tell me what action you have been able to take in the matter, as I must inform my Government.

I avail, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK

[J 492/224/1]

No. 108.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 77.)
Sir,

Foreign Office, March 7, 1927.

IN your despatch No. 34 of the 1st February you furnished me with a report on your unsuccessful endeavours to induce the Abyssinian Government to trace and punish the criminals in connection with the murder of certain British subjects in Abyssinia.

2. If, as I assume to be the case, it can be shown that the Abyssinian Government have failed to bring to justice the murderers of British subjects when it was in their power to do so and if their failure was due to either malice or negligence, His Majesty's Government would be justified in making representations and in demanding compensation. Alternatively if the Abyssinian Government consistently fail to lay hold of the murderers and plead inability to do so, they prove themselves unable to administer their own country so as to afford to foreigners that measure of protection to which they are entitled, and His Majesty's Government would be equally justified in making strong representations. One cannot, of course, expect the Abyssinian Government to provide the amount of law and order which exists in more civilised countries, but there is a minimum which one is entitled to expect from a member of the League of Nations, and it appears from your report that British subjects in Abyssinia do not enjoy even that minimum.

3. In the circumstances, you may inform the Abyssinian Government that His Majesty's Government have followed these cases with growing concern, and unless the murderers are promptly apprehended and punished they will have no alternative but to insist upon the payment of a suitable indemnity by the Abyssinian Government, and they will not hesitate to give publicity to the whole story.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 582/114/1]

No. 109.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 9.)

Sir,

Downing Street, March 8, 1927.

WITH reference to paragraph 4 of the letter from this Department of the 15th January last, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to transmit to you, to be laid before Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain, the accompanying copy of a schedule which has been received from the Governor of Kenya, setting out the compensation to be demanded from the Abyssinian Government in respect of the raids into Kenya territory which were reported in his despatches of the 15th May and the 24th June, 1926. Copies of these despatches were communicated to you under cover of letters from this Department of the 24th June and of the 14th August respectively.

2. Sir Austen Chamberlain will observe that the first two raids specified on the schedule are those reported in the Governor's despatch of the 15th May and referred to in the despatch enclosed with your letter of the 22nd November as the

"Gurreh" (Boran) raids. The other three raids mentioned in the schedule are those reported in Sir Edward Grigg's despatch of the 24th June, and described in Mr. Maclean's despatch as the "Aulihan" raids. Mr. Amery presumes that the schedule can now be communicated to His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.

3. I am also to refer to the letter from this Department of the 15th January, and to state that the Governor of Kenya has now reported that Major Miles, His Majesty's consul at Mega, has been appointed British representative to enquire, in conjunction with Mr. Glenday, into the raids perpetrated by the Gelubba on the Gabbra tribe (the raids described by Mr. Maclean in his despatch above mentioned as the "Galabba" raid), and by Abyssinians and Aulihan Somalis on the tribes of the Mandera district (the "Gurreh" (Boran) and the "Aulihan" raids). Major Miles has been furnished with a copy of the schedule enclosed with this letter. The Governor adds that it is hoped that the meeting with Abyssinian representatives will take place at Moyale. It will be observed from the foregoing that not only the Gelubba (or "Galabba") raids, as originally contemplated, but also the "Gurreh" (Boran) and the "Aulihan" raids will be discussed at the meeting. Mr. Amery presumes that this has been arranged with the concurrence of His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.

4. I am also to enclose for Sir Austen Chamberlain's information a copy of a note which has been received from the Governor of Kenya, giving the results of a discussion held at Nairobi on the 6th January, at which Mr. W. C. Bottomley, C.B., C.M.G., O.B.E., of this Department, was present, regarding various matters affecting the Kenya-Abyssinian frontier.

5. I am to take this opportunity to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th February, to which a separate reply will shortly be sent.

I am, &c.

(For Under-Secretary of State),
HAROLD ALLEN.

Enclosure in No. 109.

Meeting held at Government House on January 8, 1927.

(Confidential.)

Present:

His Excellency the Governor.
Mr. W. C. Bottomley, C.B., C.M.G.
The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.
The Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary.
Major A. T. Miles, D.S.O., M.C.
Mr. S. H. La Fontaine.

AGENDA:

- (a.) Mandera raids—Compensation.
- (b.) Gabbra raids—Compensation.
- (c.) Southern Frontier of Abyssinia.
- (d.) Pacification of Northern Frontier Province.
- (e.) Repatriation.
- (f.) Status of "Tenants" on British side.

(a) and (b). *Mandera and Gabbra Raids.*

The arrangements as detailed in telegram of the 4th January, 1927, viz., that an Abyssinian officer meet Major Miles at Mega on the 12th March, and that they proceed together to hold a joint enquiry at Moyale, were approved by his Excellency.

Major Miles was given a free hand to make the best arrangements he could on the basis of the schedules (already compiled) of the various claims.

(c). *Southern Frontier of Abyssinia.*

There appeared to be no need for any immediate action in this regard, though it was noted that the salient Gaddaduma-Dawa River-Eil Wak was dangerously situated in respect of Abyssinian, Marehan and Aulihan tribes and was costly in respect of troops and transport of food. Save in the matter of the sphere of influence no real advantage appeared to derive from its being retained. Should subsequently some concession be required towards Abyssinia say in respect of a good boundary in the region of the Boma Plateau or elsewhere, this area might be borne in mind.

(d). *Pacification of the Northern Frontier Province.*

The only danger is external; noted that Government's general policy is to move its military forces eastward, leaving the centre and west to be defended by police. The "saturation" policy met with general agreement, and it was further agreed that closer settlement along the border could be encouraged advantageously and that the best course would be to sink wells in areas where the existing grazing could not be utilised for lack of water. The difficulty lay in the lack of funds and the imposition of taxation was regarded as very desirable, though it was recognised that care must be taken in that connection, having regard to the Somaliland experience. Mr. Butler to be consulted on his return from the Abyssinian border.

The difficulty in regard to cattle quarantine, cattle being the only source of wealth, was recognised. Sheep, however, could be exported and a certain amount of taxation could be paid in bullocks, which would be credited as rations.

(e). *Repatriation.*

It was agreed that forcible measures could not be adopted. There is no objection to the Abyssinians trying to persuade their people to return as suggested by Mr. Zaphiro. Assistance to this end to be given, if asked.

(f). *The "Tenants."*

The treaty of 1907 is binding in this respect, but a complication will arise from the fact that children born in the Northern Frontier Province are British subjects.

In general regard to the question of closer population of the Northern Frontier Province, his Excellency directed that a rough economic survey be made showing population human and cattle, water supplies, &c., areas densely, partially or in no way utilised being indicated.

[J 611/114/1]

No. 110.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 12.)

(No. 46.)

HIS Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa presents his compliments to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of despatch to Major Miles, Mega, and of telegram to the Governor, Nairobi, of to-day's date, respecting a special mission to enquire into raids and other questions on Kenya-Abyssinian frontier.

Addis Ababa, February 8, 1927.

Enclosure 1 in No. 110.

Mr. Bentinck to Major Miles (Mega).

(No. 1.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, February 8, 1927.

AS I have already informed the Governor of Kenya and requested his Excellency to inform you, Ras Taffari has agreed to send a special mission, consisting of four officers in whom he has confidence, to meet you at Gardula on the 20th March to enquire into the raids of which His Majesty's Legation have had cause to complain during the past year. I will let you know the names of the officers in due course. If it is necessary to proceed from Gardula to Hamerkorki, you will be able to decide this with the commission on the spot, but His Highness thinks that this may not be necessary. From Gardula you will no doubt find it necessary to proceed eastwards in order to enquire into the Gurreh (Boran) and Aulihan raids. His Highness is in agreement with this also. Possibly the commission may be instructed to enquire into the conduct of Grazmach Belatchio and Private Ayella in connection with the robbery of 5,000 shillings, but this will depend upon whether these men are already on their way to Addis Ababa for trial or not. I shall hear about this later on and let you know.

2. For your information and guidance I enclose a brief summary of the correspondence and decisions taken regarding the raids. This was given in translation to Ras Taffari's Foreign Secretary for his guidance. Copies of the

[16460]

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previous correspondence with His Highness on these subjects are also attached.* They should serve to make the position clear to you in case these notes should not all have reached you already. Your joint enquiry will deal with points 1 to 3 on the enclosed summary and possibly with point 5. You will observe that point 4 is to be settled between yourself and Fitaurari Ayella direct.

3. Ras Taffari is giving order to Fitaurari Ayella to accompany you to Gardula for the enquiry, and His Highness assures me that he can guarantee your safety. I have told him that you will probably be accompanied by another officer from Kenya—Captain Glenday. I understand that it is His Highness's intention to send Fitaurari Wolde Gabriel, who is now here, with the mission to answer on the spot for his alleged conduct.

4. From what the Foreign Secretary has said and from what Ras Taffari has himself said to me, I gather that it is his serious intention to try to reach a definite and final settlement of these vexed questions and to avoid all frontier troubles in the future. I think he is anxious to let his own people and us see that he is better able to look after the southern frontier than was the Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis. I quoted to His Highness the happy settlement reached last year between Nagadras Desta and Major Cheesman, of which you may have heard, and I expressed the hope that that might be a precedent for the future.

5. I am forwarding copies of this despatch and of Enclosure 2 to the Foreign Office and Nairobi. They are already in possession of copies of the nine other enclosures.

I have, &c.
C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 2 in No. 110.

Summary of Raids and Incidents on Kenya-Abyssinian Frontier.

1. *Galubba*.—Took place in September 1925. His Highness informed in Minister's note dated the 15th February, 1926. His Highness has agreed to joint enquiry by Major Miles and an Abyssinian officer in whom he has confidence at Hamerkorki or some other suitable place. Officer to reach Mega on the 12th March and proceed to spot with Major Miles.

2. *Gurreh (Boran) Raid*.—Took place in February 1926. Note to His Highness dated the 21st June, 1926. Fitaurari Wolde Gabriel and some persons accused of being perpetrators are now in Addis Ababa for an enquiry. See His Highness's note dated the 7th July. His Highness has agreed that the officer who enquires into the Galubba raid should also make enquiries into this one with Major Miles.

3. *Auliha Raids*.—Occurred on the 11th, 17th and 31st March, 1926. Note to His Highness on the subject dated the 24th July, 1926. His Highness has agreed that the two above-mentioned officers shall also enquire into this matter.

4. *Tribute Levied from Boran British Subjects*.—Note to His Highness the 6th December and reply dated the 20th December. As there has evidently been some misunderstanding and as Major Miles was due to reach Mega on the 17th January, His Majesty's Minister suggested, and His Highness agreed, that Major Miles and Fitaurari Ayella should be instructed to settle this matter together.

5. *Robbery of 5,000 Shillings (£250) on July 15, 1926*.—Note to His Highness dated the 26th November and reply dated the 1st December. Grazmach Belatchio and Private Ayella ordered to Addis Ababa for trial.

Enclosure 3 in No. 110.

Copy of Addis Ababa Telegram (No. 2) to Governor, Nairobi, of January 15, 1927.

YOUR telegram of 6th January.

Ras Taffari hopes to arrange for officer with authority and enjoying his confidence to reach Mega by the 12th March, but we both question whether Hamerkorki, north of Lake Stafania, would not be more suitable place than Moyale for enquiry. He will consider about place and let me know in a few days. He agrees that same officer

* Not printed.

should also make enquiry with Major Miles into Gurreh (Boran) raid which took place in February 1926, and concerning which Fitaurari Wolde Gabriel has been summoned to Addis Ababa, and Auliha raids which occurred last March.

My telegram of 24th December.

Ras Taffari will give instructions to Fitaurari Ayella to settle this matter with Major Miles.

[J 582/114/1]

No. 111.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 83.)

Foreign Office, March 16, 1927.

Sir,

UNDER cover of your despatch No. 46 of the 8th February you furnished me with a copy of the instructions issued by you to His Majesty's consul at Mega on the occasion of his meeting with the Abyssinian special mission despatched by Ras Taffari to enquire into the raids of which His Majesty's Legation have had cause to complain during the last two years.

2. I have now received the enclosed letter* from the Colonial Office, which also deals with the proposed meeting. I am causing a copy of your despatch under reference to be forwarded to that Department, who will see that the first meeting is not to take place at Moyale, as they thought, but at Gardula. As regards the schedule furnished by the Governor of Kenya, you need take no immediate action, as you will see that a copy has been supplied to Major Miles, who will no doubt make use of it in his dealings with the Abyssinian commissioners. Until the results of these discussions are known it will not be necessary to present any claim to the Abyssinian Government.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 745/114/1]

No. 112.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received March 28.)

Sir,

Colonial Office, March 26, 1927.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to refer to your letter of the 17th February, in paragraph 2 of which it is suggested that His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa might be authorised to present to the Abyssinian Government without reference to London claims in respect of damages committed by Abyssinian raiders into British territory, as soon as he learns of the raid from the Colonial Government concerned.

2. Mr. Amery regards the matter as one for Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to decide, but, for his part, he is disposed to think that there are certain advantages in maintaining the present arrangement. As is pointed out in your letter, until the present case no claim on the Abyssinian Government for monetary compensation in respect of raids has, in fact, been made for some fourteen years. Moreover, Mr. Amery is not aware that any such claim presented to the Abyssinian Government in the past has ever been met by them. In the circumstances it appears desirable that a monetary claim should be preferred only in cases where His Majesty's Government are prepared to press strongly for the acceptance of the claim, and it would appear that this is more likely to be ensured if His Majesty's Government decide in which case a demand should be preferred than if this is left to the Government of the Colony affected and to His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa to decide.

I am, &c.

(For Under-Secretary of State),
HAROLD P. ALLEN.

* No. 109.

[16460]

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[J 745/114/1]

No. 113.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 99.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 30, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 53 of the 19th February regarding claims for compensation for raids into Kenya, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a further letter on this subject from the Colonial Office.*

2. Unless for any reason you wish me to press for the arrangement suggested in my despatch under reference, whereby you and the Governor of Kenya would be empowered, without reference to London, to use your discretion as to whether a claim should or should not be presented in any given instance, I am content to agree that the present arrangement shall be maintained.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 1347/114/1]

No. 114.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 23.)

(No. 121.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, April 28, 1927.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 99 of the 30th March last regarding compensation for raids into Kenya and enclosing a letter from the Colonial Office, dated the 26th March. I agree with the views expressed in the Colonial Office letter. Our recent experiences in endeavouring to extract money from the Abyssinian Government force me to the conclusion that it is damaging to our prestige to make numerous small demands for compensation, which are not founded on bedrock reasons and which we are not in a position to press with the full support of His Majesty's Government.

2. If the present enquiry into raids should really produce proof accepted by both parties, then I think that a carefully considered and detailed claim for compensation must be presented to the Abyssinian Government with the full force of His Majesty's Government behind it, and we must be prepared to insist on payment being made without undignified bargaining. All this can only be done with the approval of His Majesty's Government. But we must be careful not to present a claim which cannot be properly substantiated and supported.

3. I am forwarding copies of this despatch by safe route to Nairobi and Mega.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 1439/224/1]

No. 115.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 30.)

(No. 126.)

HIS Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note from His Majesty's Minister to Ras Taffari, dated the 2nd May, respecting the murder of a woman named Cheose at Maji.

Addis Ababa, May 4, 1927.

Enclosure in No. 115.

Mr. Bentinck to Ras Taffari.

ON the 28th August, 1924, Mr. Bullock, His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, had the honour to address a note to Her Majesty the Empress regarding the enslavement of a Sudanese British subject named Cheose, widow of Morate, a Baluchi British subject,

* No. 112.

and her little six-year-old daughter Jamila. His Majesty's consul at Maji reported later that orders had been sent to Maji for the release of both women. The mother was then released, but the daughter was alleged to have died and could never be found by her mother. Whilst Mr. Hodson was away on leave last year, the poor woman Cheose was again caught by slave raiders in Maji itself. Mr. Hodson reports that a rope was put round her neck and she was dragged along by it. As she started to shriek she was brutally murdered and her body was left in the market place.

I have the honour to draw your Imperial Highness's serious attention to this disgraceful treatment of a British subject, and to request that an immediate enquiry be made on the spot so that the murderers shall receive exemplary punishment for their crime.

His Majesty's Government, to whom I am, of course, reporting the matter, will expect to learn in due course that the slave raiders and murderers have been arrested and suitably punished.

I avail, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Addis Ababa, May 2, 1927.

[J 1440/114/1]

No. 116.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 30.)

(No. 127.)

HIS Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of his note to Ras Taffari, dated the 30th April, respecting the Aulihan raid.

Addis Ababa, May 5, 1927.

Enclosure in No. 116.

Mr. Bentinck to Ras Taffari.

(No. 19.)

(After greetings.)

Your Imperial Highness,

Addis Ababa, April 30, 1927.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Imperial Highness that I have received a report from the Governor of Kenya Colony that early in January the Aulihan crossed the Web River into Dilhara, which is the country lying between the Juba and Web Rivers. Their numbers were estimated at about 3,000.

On the 7th January a small raiding party of twenty-five Aulihan Rer Afgab, with sixteen rifles, made an attempt on the Gurreh cattle at Birchika. This occurred at 9 A.M., when a herd of about 150 cattle was being watered; the raiders came down to the river bed, fired a few shots at the herds, and started to surround the cattle. A picket of three police from the Birchika post which had accompanied the cattle to the ford returned the fire, killing the leader and another man and wounding two more, one of whom was captured forty-eight hours later and is now in hospital. The leader killed was Nashi Ageyi, an Aulihan of Serenli district, where he keeps his cattle. It appears that he took part in the raid near Birchika in March 1926 also, and made a practice of going up to Dilhar for the raiding season.

I shall be very grateful if your Imperial Highness will instruct the commission now on their way to Mega to enquire into this matter among others they have before them. I understand that the Governor of Kenya is also giving the necessary instructions to Major Miles.

I avail, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 1594/114/1]

No. 117.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 14.)

(No. 137.)

HIS Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of the reply from Ras Taffari, dated the 13th May, 1927, respecting the Aulibau raid.

Addis Ababa, May 20, 1927.

Enclosure in No. 117.

Ras Taffari to Mr. Bentinck.

(After Greetings.)

Addis Ababa, May 13, 1927.

I HAVE received your letter of the 30th April, 1927, in which you state that you have received an information from the Governor of Kenya Colony concerning an incident which took place between the Aulihans and Gurrehs at a place called Birchika. We have accordingly sent orders to our delegates at Boran to enquire into this affair also. We will therefore let you know the answer as soon as we hear from them.

(Seal of Ras Taffari.)

[J 1597/224/1]

No. 118.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 14.)

(No. 139.)

HIS Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa presents his compliments to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note from Ras Taffari, dated the 13th May, 1927, respecting the murder of a woman at Maji in 1924.

Addis Ababa, May 20, 1927.

Enclosure in No. 118.

Ras Taffari to Mr. Bentinck.

(After greetings.)

Addis Ababa, May 13, 1927.

I HAVE seen your letter of the 4th May, 1927, in which you again ask us concerning a question about which Mr. Bullock, His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, had already written to us on the 28th August, 1924. Perhaps the consul did not personally witness the matter, so it seems to me that it is not possible to say definitely that it occurred. However, I have given orders to the chiefs of the country that they should enquire into the matter and find out the truth.

(Seal of Ras Taffari.)

[J 1606/1446/1]

No. 119.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 14.)

(No. 97.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

MY despatch No. 136.

Addis Ababa, June 10, 1927.

Governor of Somaliland and His Majesty's consul at Harar report large Somali camel caravan on the way from Hargeisa through Ogaden district to Maharaa, and party, who are safe at some distance west of Ogaden, was attacked by Abyssinian soldiers led by Abyssinian Chief Jigjiga in person near Daggah Bur, and twelve men and one woman were killed and five British Somalis taken prisoners. Report

adds that headman of caravan was deliberately shot and his body mutilated and caravan completely looted. Although the whole expedition's arrangements were made with Ras Taffari, Deputy Governor of Harar declares that he knew nothing about caravan.

I am making urgent representations to Ras Taffari and demanding immediate release of prisoners.

No. 120.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 14.)

(No. 98.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, June 14, 1927.

MY immediately preceding telegram.

I think it desirable that outrage be given publicity in newspapers.

[J 1633/1446/1]

No. 121.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 16.)

(No. 99.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, June 15, 1927.

MY telegram No. 97.

I handed note to Ras Taffari yesterday, Tuesday. He had no news. He expressed regret, and said he would again urgently demand full details. He suggested that there might also have been casualties on Abyssinian side. He would give immediate instructions for prisoners to be brought to His Majesty's consul at Harar "in accordance with treaty." He was inclined to favour my idea of joint enquiry by Harar Deputy Governor and His Majesty's consul at Harar, but, pending report from Abyssinian side, he could make no definite statement. I am advising Archer to remain in hill country for the present.

So far as I can see at present, Ras Taffari having agreed to all Archer's plans and promised to give all necessary orders, must have forgotten to do so. But this omission would not justify attack by soldiers.

(Sent to Berbera, No. 8, and Harar, No. 3.)

[J 1628/1446/1]

No. 122.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 15.)

(No. 100.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, June 15, 1927.

MY telegram No. 97.

It is not yet certain whether Chief Jigjiga leads the raids in person. I am asking for confirmation.

[J 1606/1446/1]

No. 123.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 84.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, June 17, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 97 of 14th June: Capture of Somali caravan in Abyssinia. Unless you desire otherwise, I propose to say nothing to press until you confirm that you still desire publicity, that Chief Jigjiga led or was responsible for raid, and that he is identical with person mentioned in your despatches Nos. 128, 185 and 214 of 1925 and in Ras Taffari's note enclosed in your despatch No. 117 of 1926, relevant passages in all of which I propose to communicate to press as throwing light on present raid.

[J 1657/1446/1]

No. 124.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.

Downing Street, June 17, 1927.

Sir,

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to transmit to you, for the information of Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain, a copy of a telegram from the Governor of the Somaliland Protectorate, dated the 10th June, 1927, on the subject of an incident in connection with Sir Geoffrey Archer's shooting expedition in Abyssinia and Somaliland.

I am, &c.

S. H. WILSON.

Enclosure in No. 124.

Telegram from the Governor of Somaliland to Mr. Amery.

June 10, 1927.

MY telegram of 8th February.

Regret to report unfortunate occurrence in connection with Archer's caravan. He had arranged for caravan of 120 camels from Hargeisa to meet him at Daggahbur, Abyssinian post about 100 miles south of Hargeisa. This caravan consisted of camels of protectorate tribes in charge of their owner and a headman, Sulub Abokr, British Somali, with an honourable record in Zanzibar and East Africa. Caravan was attacked at night about 30 miles north of Daggahbur by Abyssinian soldiers and completely looted. Abyssinians are said to have come from Jigjiga and to have been led by the Governor of Jigjiga in person. Reports at present show that twelve British Somali men and one woman killed and all loads looted. I have not yet received the Abyssinian version of the story as to the cause of this attack, but letter received from Daggahbur suggests that it was due to mistake. I am in communication with the Minister, but have not been able to get in touch with Archer, who had intended to meet the caravan at Daggahbur when the Maharajah had finished shooting in Arussi country. There is no reason to suppose that Archer or the Maharajah are or will be in any difficulty or danger, as they have a personal escort supplied by Ras Tafari, and I feel sure that every assistance will be given to them. I understand, too, that Archer obtained the necessary pass for this caravan to enter Abyssinian territory. Caravan was loaded with rations, tents and the personal effects of Archer and the Maharajah.

[J 1695/1446/1]

No. 125.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 20.)

(No. 104.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, June 20, 1927.

MY telegram No. 99.

Ras Tafari says that he is still awaiting full details. He is instructing Deputy Governor of Harar to arrange with His Majesty's consul for joint enquiry. He says that caravan fired first at soldiers. This, I said, was improbable.

Ras Tafari says he will make arrangements to complete caravan at Daggah, to recover lost property, &c., and will give necessary orders to Deputy Governor so that Archer may continue journey according to programme.

(Repeated to Berbera, No. 10.)

No. 126.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 24.)

(No. 105.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, June 23, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 84.

Chief Jigjiga is the man mentioned in the despatch to which you refer. The evidence so far received indicates that he was implicated, but this has not been definitely proved. I think, however, fact of murderous attack on caravan by Abyssinian soldiers, in which about eight to thirteen British Somalis were killed, should be communicated to the press. Exposure to press criticism is one of the few means we have of bringing pressure to bear on the Abyssinian Government. Evidence of the survivors shows that the attack occurred at 4 A.M., before the caravan had left the camp where it had spent the night.

We cannot overlook this act of savagery, and the Abyssinian Government must be made to understand that it is regarded as such.

Fact that you have received reports from Addis Ababa should not be communicated to the press.

[J 1775/1446/1]

No. 127.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 28.)

(No. 108.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, June 27, 1927.

MY telegram No. 105.

In view of seriousness of outrage, I hope I may soon be able to deliver to Ras Tafari message from you to show you expect those responsible for the massacre and looting will be severely punished, and that the Government will pay full indemnity to the relatives of the victims, also for looted property.

[J 1775/1446/1]

No. 128.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 88.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, June 30, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 108 of 27th June: Attack on Somali caravan.

You may deliver suitable message from me in the sense proposed. Facts of outrage as reported so far are being given to the press.

CHAPTER V.—SLAVERY.

[J 55/55/1]

No. 129.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 10, 1927.)(No. 245.)
Sir,

Addis Ababa, December 18, 1926.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 379 of the 11th ultimo, enclosing copy of a note dated the 9th November from His Majesty's Embassy at Paris to the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs regarding the slave traffic in the Red Sea area, I have the honour to report that I referred to this question in conversation with my French colleague to-day. M. Gaussen said that he had recently discussed the matter with the new French Governor of French Somaliland. He had found M. Tellier most anxious to do everything possible to prevent this traffic in slaves from Tadjourah and Obok. The French Government had supplied a motor boat for patrol duty, but this boat was not fast enough to be of any use. M. Tellier had therefore applied for a more powerful one, which should be able to overtake the Arab sailing boats. Besides, he was introducing a system of reporting stations for watching the movements of suspect sailing vessels at about every 2 kilom. along the coast. By this means it was hoped to be able to give the commander of the motor boat timely information to enable him to catch the suspect sailing vessels. M. Gaussen thought M. Tellier's suggestions likely to meet with a sympathetic reception in Paris. He did not think it would be possible at present completely to suppress the slave trade, but he thought M. Tellier's scheme might help to reduce the evil considerably.

2. M. Gaussen then said that the French Government had received information, which they had communicated to His Majesty's Government, to show that, in spite of our precautions, slaves were shipped across the Red Sea from Port Sudan. These were mostly women and children and many of them came originally from French Colonies. They joined up with pilgrims passing through Port Sudan. The pilgrims were in possession of passports, whereas the women and children were not. These last named managed to escape the control of the port authorities and were sold as slaves on reaching Arabia. I observed that about a year ago I knew the French Government had mentioned to His Majesty's Government that they believed that slaves got across the Red Sea from Port Sudan and Suakin, but that, after enquiry at Port Sudan, we had satisfied ourselves that this was impossible. I gathered from M. Gaussen that what he now referred to was a recent discovery.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch to Aden and Khartum.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 3445/148/1]

No. 130.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 11.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 20, 1927.

IN your despatch No. 223 of the 26th November last, you reported a conversation with Count Colli on the subject of slavery conditions in Abyssinia.

2. Count Colli's information that slaves in Kaffa and Maji are subjected to even worse treatment than previously is disquieting. You should instruct consular officers to report on the position in their respective districts and to state whether it has changed either for the better or for the worse since they last reported. You should forward these reports to me under a covering despatch giving your own appreciation of the situation generally, your report to reach me not later than the 1st June. It will then be possible for me to consider whether any action with the League, or elsewhere, will be possible.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 271/55/1]

No. 131.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 4.)

(No. 297.)

HIS Majesty's representative at Paris presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, dated the 31st January, 1927, respecting slave traffic in the Red Sea area.

Paris, February 3, 1927.

Enclosure in No. 131.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs to British Embassy, Paris.

PAR sa note du 9 novembre dernier, l'Ambassade de Sa Majesté britannique a bien voulu communiquer au Ministère des Affaires étrangères certaines informations relatives au trafic des esclaves dans la région de la mer Rouge.

Le Ministère des Affaires étrangères remercie l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne de ces renseignements, dont il n'a pas manqué de donner connaissance aux autorités françaises compétentes. Mais il croit devoir lui faire remarquer que les mesures prises par ces autorités ont rendu pratiquement inexistants les faits de traite, en ce qui concerne la colonie de la Côte française des Somalis et que, notamment, les ports d'Obok et de Tadjourah, spécialement visés dans la note du 9 novembre, ne servent en aucune façon de points d'embarquement aux trafiquants.

Dès 1924, le Gouverneur de la Côte française des Somalis a interdit par arrêté, à toute embarcation de moins de 100 tonneaux, de naviguer dans les eaux territoriales de la colonie et de toucher terre entre Ras Bir et Ras Ali.

Un boutre, armé de mitrailleuses et de canons, et muni d'un moteur semi-Diesel, a été spécialement affecté à la surveillance de la traite. Ce navire, identique d'aspect à ceux dont se servent habituellement les trafiquants, mais doué d'une plus grande vitesse, constitue une menace permanente contre ces derniers, et a rendu tout embarquement impossible à l'intérieur du golfe de Tadjourah.

Des postes nouveaux ont été créés à Mouhélé, à 10 kilom. nord de Khor Angar et à 15 kilom. de la frontière italienne, et à Ras Siyan. Ces postes permettent déjà d'exercer une surveillance efficace sur cette partie de la Côte. Les autorités françaises se proposent, cependant, d'en compléter encore le réseau par l'installation de postes nouveaux, formant une ligne ininterrompue, chaque détachement ayant vue sur le détachement voisin.

La colonie de la Côte française des Somalis entretient à Obok un poste de vingt hommes. Ce seul fait exclut la possibilité du trafic des esclaves en ce point. D'autre part, on ne pourrait comprendre pourquoi les marchands d'esclaves feraient de Tadjourah un centre d'opérations, car les boutres partant de cette localité devraient passer sous les vues de Djibouti, d'Obok et de Khor Angar et courir, par conséquent, le maximum de risques. Les informations d'après lesquelles des faits de traite auraient eu lieu récemment dans ces deux ports semblent donc peu vraisemblables.

Le Ministère des Affaires étrangères tient à faire remarquer à ce propos à l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne que l'affirmation d'après laquelle Tadjourah était apparemment le lieu de destination du convoi d'esclaves attaqué en décembre 1925 en territoire éthiopien ne repose, à sa connaissance, sur aucun fondement.

L'exposé ci-dessus, qui apporte à l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne de nouveaux éléments d'information, lui permettra, sans aucun doute, de se rendre compte que, du côté français, tout le possible a été fait en vue d'empêcher la traite. Si des débarquements d'esclaves continuent à avoir lieu sur la côte du Yémen, ainsi que l'indique la note du 9 décembre, ce fait démontre seulement la nécessité de renforcer la surveillance dans cette zone de la mer Rouge, dont le contrôle échappe entièrement, d'ailleurs, aux autorités françaises.

Paris, le 31 janvier 1927.

[16460]

N 2

[J 489/55/1]

No. 132.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 28.)

(No. 95.)

Sir,

Cairo, February 20, 1927.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 64 of the 20th January, enclosing a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa in regard to the question of slave traffic in the Red Sea, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of a report which I have received on this subject from the Governor-General of the Sudan.

2. You will observe that, so far as French allegations respecting the transport of slaves between Port Sudan and Arabia are concerned, the possibilities of any such traffic are now even less than they were when my despatch No. 216 of the 3rd April was forwarded to you, and that Sir John Maffey does not consider it necessary to reply to the more recent statement made to Mr. Bentinck by the French Minister.

I have, &c.

LLOYD, High Commissioner.

Enclosure in No. 132.

Governor-General of the Sudan to Lord Lloyd.

My Lord,

Khartum, February 13, 1927.

I HAVE the honour to refer to your Lordship's despatch No. 34 of the 28th January in regard to the question of slave traffic in the Red Sea raised in Mr. Bentinck's despatch No. 245 of the 18th December, 1926.

2. It will be within your Lordship's recollection that early in 1926 the French Government stated their belief that the majority of slaves shipped to Arabia passed through Port Sudan.

Your Lordship (despatch No. 81 of the 6th March, 1926) asked for the material for a reply to the French Government's allegation.

3. My despatch No. 55 of the 3rd April, 1926, in reply, demonstrated that the French Government's assertions were entirely unfounded.

4. The position as therein described is unchanged, save for the fact that the possibility of slave traffic in the Red Sea has been further reduced during the past year by—

- (a.) The increased degree of public security in the Hejaz and the more enlightened attitude of Ibn Saud towards slavery.
- (b.) The careful investigation carried out by the Special Commissioner for Slavery in 1926, which provides us with a sound basis for preventive measures.
- (c.) The co-operation and advice of His Britannic Majesty's consul, Jeddah.
- (d.) The transfer of the Suakin Quarantine Station to the Sudan Government, with the consequent closer control and scrutiny of pilgrims and their families.

5. The Special Commissioner for Slavery, in reference to the pilgrimage, reported that "there is little reason to fear that there is traffic in children, and the present precautions taken, as far as children are concerned, seem to be adequate." This welcome assurance is supported by pilgrimage statistics.

6. Your Lordship will observe from Mr. Bentinck's despatch that M. Gaussen apparently referred to a "recent discovery" of slave traffic in the Red Sea. No discovery of the kind has been brought to my notice, and it appears to me unnecessary further to rebut statements of this nature before I am provided with the particulars. No reply, therefore, has been sent to Mr. Bentinck.

7. Your Lordship may rest assured that the precautions taken by this administration in regard to slave traffic during the pilgrimage are unrelaxed.

I have, &c.

J. L. MAFFEY,

Governor-General of the Sudan.

[J 1041/55/1]

No. 133.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 26.)

(No. 55.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, April 23, 1927.

I HEAR from one of my colleagues that "Egyptian Gazette" of 29th November, 1926, contains an article by Bishop Gwynne in which bishop says my oriental secretary told him that slaves could easily be purchased in Addis Ababa. Article has just been brought to notice of Ras Taffari, who is furious, and, according to my colleague, he contemplates asking for the recall of oriental secretary. This may be exaggerated, but should request be made I propose to resist it.

I am astounded if bishop has really been as indiscreet as alleged.

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 7.)

[J 1057/55/1]

No. 134.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 27.)

(No. 148.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Cairo, April 27, 1927.

REFERENCE is to bishop's lecture at Cairo on Abyssinian trip in which he is reported by "Egyptian Gazette" as saying:—

"Mr. Zaphiro, oriental secretary, told me a slave is bought for £E. 10."

Bishop admits that he did incidentally make this remark in the course of a private lecture, which was not intended for publication.

(Repeated to Addis Ababa, No. 55.)

[J 1062/55/1]

No. 135.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 28.)

(No. 59.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, April 26, 1927.

MY telegram No. 55.

After having seen "Gazette" I asked for an immediate audience with Ras Taffari so as to take the wind out of his sails, and, quite privately and alone, I expressed to him my personal regret at the indiscretions of the bishop who was my guest and courteously entertained by him.

Ras Taffari said he was deeply hurt. Up to a few days ago he had looked upon the bishop as his friend, and he had intended to instruct the mission, which is shortly to start for Egypt, to ask the new Abuna in the first instance to consult the bishop on the subject and then to apply to the Patriarch for a man recommended by bishop.

As regards the oriental secretary, he said that all the chiefs were furious and the Empress had seen the passage in question. He himself was being attacked and his own position was awkward. He was at a loss to know what to do and he asked my advice. He hoped that the bishop might be able to telegraph satisfactory explanation as he feared that otherwise, speaking quite privately, it might be impossible for him to continue to work with the oriental secretary.

I told His Highness that I sympathised with his point of view, but I warned him question of the oriental secretary was very delicate and might become most serious. I therefore begged him to refrain from taking any hasty or official action. Ras Taffari promised to refrain until we had again had a private talk by which time he hoped that I might have some message from the bishop.

My impression is that Ras Taffari is worried about his own position in this affair, and is anxious to find means of saving the oriental secretary, his friend, and against whom people are intriguing.

He hopes that the bishop to whom I am telegraphing separately may be able to find a solution.

[J 1060/55/1]

No. 136.

Mr Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 28.)(No. 60.)
(Telegraphic.)*Addis Ababa, April 26, 1927.*

MY immediately preceding telegram.

Should I fail to reach satisfactory settlement I rely on you to back me in supporting oriental secretary, who is victim of indiscretion of another about a matter, which is after all the truth, although he does not recollect having made any such.

Situation of Legation will become impossible if Abyssinian Government, having succeeded in obtaining removal of my predecessor, should now break Zaphiro.

[J 1060/55/1]

No. 137.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).(No. 60.)
(Telegraphic.) R.*Foreign Office, May 2, 1927.*

YOUR telegram No. 60 of 26th April: Ras Taffari's attitude towards oriental secretary.

You may rely on my full support.

It so happens that I have just received from Mr. Hodson an advance copy of his despatch to you of the 25th March. Though I knew that grave evils existed, I am shocked by this evidence of their grossness. I need not explain to you or to so well-informed a person as Ras Taffari what impression would be produced here and elsewhere throughout the civilised world by the publication of such a despatch and of all the similar information in the possession of His Majesty's and other Governments.

Ras Taffari knows the undertakings given by Abyssinia on her admission to the League upon the fulfilment of which her credit and status in the eyes of the world depend. He is far too enlightened and humane himself to have any sympathy with such practices or to be in any doubt as to the consequences of picking a quarrel on such an issue. I regret as you do that the issue should arise through the bishop's indiscretion in quoting, whether accurately or not, the words spoken by an official in a private conversation, but there can be no question of withdrawing the official on that account. Indeed, if I did so, I should at once be called upon for a full explanation of the circumstances which could not be anything else than a grave exposure of scandals already known to many people outside Government circles.

The true lesson of the incident is quite different. It shows what grave risks Abyssinia is running in allowing the continuance of these evil practices. It should strengthen the hands of Ras Taffari in his efforts for reform and enable him to bring home to the Empress and chiefs the necessity for putting an end to a scandal to which an accident may at any moment draw the attention of the whole Christian world.

You may use these arguments as and when you think proper, either as your own or as a message from me.

No. 138.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 5.)(No. 72.)
(Telegraphic.) R.*Addis Ababa, May 4, 1927.*

EARLY reply to my telegram No. 60 would strengthen my hand considerably, as the situation is becoming strained.

[J 1296/55/1]

No. 139.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 14.)(No. 80.)
(Telegraphic.) R.*Addis Ababa, May 10, 1927.*

MY telegrams Nos. 59 and 60.

I have had a most difficult week. After great pressure from me consideration of incident was temporarily postponed during visit of Maharajah of Kut. I handed copy of your telegram No. 60 excepting last sentence to Ras Taffari. It was received in sulky silence.

Last night my Italian colleague called to warn me that certain people were stiffening Ras Taffari, and that in my audience fixed for this evening latter would not be satisfied with bishop's explanation, but would demand departure of Zaphiro, and if I refused he would decline to continue Tsana conversations. My Italian colleague expressed his readiness to mediate at any time, but could see no other possible solution than that Zaphiro should go on leave for several months, at end of which time incident would have blown over.

Herui called this morning, and after discussing the matter with me went to see Ras Taffari to prepare ground for my visit this evening. I found Ras Taffari very difficult and unreasonable. He hinted at some official action, whilst all the time expressing desire for good relations with England and friendship with myself. Matter seemed to be reaching deadlock when Herui made personal suggestion that Zaphiro should take leave for several months; on these lines he thought solution could be found. Ras Taffari seemed disposed to accept this, but was displeased when I said that I should have to refer the question to you. Ras Taffari finally agreed to await your reply.

Do you approve of Zaphiro taking leave on the understanding that no difficulty will be made about his return?

So far as I can see the alternative will be a big quarrel, involving postponement of Lake Tsana negotiations.

I should be glad of early answer.

[J 1255/55/1]

No. 140.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 13.)(No. 81.)
(Telegraphic.) R.*Addis Ababa, May 11, 1927.*

MY immediately preceding telegram.

Following is bishop's explanation, which I sent to Ras Taffari:—

"I am authorised by Bishop Gwynne to deliver to your Imperial Highness the following message: 'The bishop deeply regrets that anything said by him at a private lecture not intended for publication should have caused offence to Empress Taffari and Abyssinian Government. He further regrets error he made in introducing name of Zaphiro in connection with slave trade, as he cannot definitely affirm what was authority on which he based his statement.'"

[J 1269/55/1]

No. 141.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).(No. 72.)
(Telegraphic.)*Foreign Office, May 18, 1927.*

YOUR telegram No. 80 of 10th May: Mr. Zaphiro.

My inclination would have been to instruct you to tell Ras Taffari that on the information at present before them His Majesty's Government are not disposed to send Mr. Zaphiro on leave much less to recall him.

I do not want a big quarrel or to endanger ultimate success of Tsana negotiations, but I could face some postponement with equanimity. Real question therefore seems to be whether resistance now will or will not in the long run strengthen your hand. Postponement in itself is not serious inconvenience provided that prospect of ultimate success is improved or at least not jeopardised. Before instructing you I shall be glad to learn your view on this point.

[J 1375/55/1]

No. 142.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 24.)

(No. 88.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, May 23, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 72.

Ras Kassa is now trying to settle matter, and Foreign Secretary suggests that I postpone my departure until 29th May. I therefore reserve judgment for the moment.

[J 1419/55/1]

No. 143.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 29.)

(No. 91.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, May 28, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 72 and my telegram No. 88.

I had long talk with Ras Taffari in the presence of Mr. Home last night. He was friendly but obstinate. After consulting Messrs. Home and Maclean, the only course we can see is for Mr. Zaphiro to apply for immediate leave. We feel that we cannot force Ras Taffari to see him, and that his ultimate chances of usefulness at this Legation would be damaged rather than improved by a quarrel. His wife and children will remain here, and I hope after some months to be able to get him back. I was unable to get Ras Taffari's promise not to make difficulties if I should wish Mr. Zaphiro back after some months. It was understood, however, that it was a *congé*, and Ras Taffari said that we would discuss question of his return later. From Ras Taffari's present attitude, I do not anticipate difficulty after some months, but he would not commit himself.

I trust you will approve of Mr. Zaphiro's request for leave, if possible to accompany me as far as Aden on 1st June, and thence proceed to England.

[J 1441/55/1]

No. 144.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 30.)

(No. 129. Very Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, May 5, 1927.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 11 of the 20th January last, I have the honour to transmit the following documents on the subject of the slave trade in Abyssinia:—

- (a.) Note of a report made to Mr. Home on the 2nd instant regarding slave raiding in the Beni Shangul and Khoma districts of Western Abyssinia.
- (b.) Copies of a despatch dated the 25th March last from Mr. Hodson, until recently His Majesty's consul at Maji.
- (c.) Copies of despatch No. 28 of the 26th March last from His Majesty's consul at Harrar.

Reports from the other consular districts will be forwarded when received. Mr. Walker telegraphs from Gorei that his report is on the way. Major Miles's could hardly be expected to arrive as yet from Mega, nor can one be expected from Major Cheesman, in view of his absence from Dangila.

2. The alleged complicity of Ras Taffari, Heir to the Throne, in the slave trade, if it can be substantiated, is most disappointing. His complicity, as recorded in Mr. Home's note, can be compared with the official communications he has made deprecating slavery in all its forms, which can, alas, be regarded mainly as white-wash for the benefit of Europeans interested in the suppression of this trade. I must ask that this report be used with the utmost discretion, as the informant might otherwise suffer at the hands of the Abyssinians.

3. My Italian colleague tells me that reports received from Italian Roman Catholic missionaries in South-West Abyssinia show that the position as regards slave trade in that region is worse than hitherto, and that the head of the missionaries has told Ras Taffari so. The missionaries have released some seventy slaves by

purchase, and are training them to earn their living. Commendatore Cora observed that he wanted proof in hand, so that, if after some years the Abyssinians should show themselves to be impossible and should refuse to sanction Lake Tsana dam and the Italian railway from Eritrea to Somaliland, it would be useful to have proof in hand about slavery to bring up against the Abyssinians. I feel that my Italian colleague's ideas are actuated by political rather than by philanthropic motives.

4. I much fear that the slave trade will not cease in Abyssinia unless and until European pressure is such as to compel its discontinuance. As I have already reported, Europe can help, if it wishes, by means of missions and schools, in addition to pressure of a more effective nature through the League of Nations awaking to its responsibilities.

5. I have addressed a note to Ras Taffari about the enslavement and murder of the British subject Cheose. Copy of this despatch and of Mr. Home's note is being sent to Khartum, where Mr. Hodson's despatch has already been received.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 1 in No. 144.

(Secret.)

Abyssinian Slave Raiding.

(Area involved being Western Abyssinia between Longitude parallels 34° and 35° and Latitude parallels 9° to 11°.)

A TRUSTWORTHY informant has confidentially given the following report:—

Two years ago Waizero Manen, wife of His Imperial Highness Taffari Makonnen, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Heir to the Throne of Abyssinia, issued 30,000 dollars to Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan, the Arab chief of Khoma, and an official of His Imperial Highness, named Azach Warrata, went to Begi, a residence of Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan, and bought 600 young blacks, aged between 7 and 13. These young slaves are now all in the residence of His Imperial Highness Taffari Makonnen, Waizero Manen, and the son-in-law of His Imperial Highness, Fitaurari Dasta Damtu, at Addis Ababa.

About eleven months ago Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan enslaved some 13,000 young blacks. In grief, seventeen of the mothers committed suicide. Of these 13,000, 500 were brought by Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan's men to Lekempti in Wallega Province. Many of the slaves' parents went in a body to Gedami and telephoned a protest to Addis Ababa. Dejach Beru, second cousin of the Empress and Governor of Gedami Province, tried to prevent the protest, and sent Gerazmatch Biratu for the purpose. El Mahdi, one of the sons of Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan, sold the other 800 slaves to people from the Sudan and to Gojjam Province. In reply to the telephonic complaint, His Imperial Highness said that ten of the principal complainants should come to Addis Ababa. They came; one of them was Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan's son, Ahmed, whose mother was a black. Ahmed sympathises with the blacks, and disapproves of his father seizing the blacks for slavery. The principal member of the delegation of complainants was Fitaurari Abdi, a black. They laid their complaint before Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis, Minister for War, himself a member of a subject tribe and sympathetic to slaves. After enquiry, he was very angry that the blacks had been enslaved. Then Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan received 3,000 dollars (probably from His Imperial Highness) and gave them to the ten men. One of the ten named Margo, brother of Fitaurari Kanda, a black, refused to be placated with money as his brother Abula had been hung for resisting slave raiders. During the last two years eleven blacks have been hung by Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan for resisting slave raiding. One day, while at Addis Ababa, Margo was going to the suburb of Gulali; he was caught by Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan and imprisoned by him for seven months. Then he escaped and was taken by a sympathiser, a Galla chief named Fitaurari Merdassa, son of a former Governor of Gedami Province, to the slave judge, Ato Balacho, at Addis Ababa. (Ato Balacho was appointed some months ago judge to deal with slave cases with a view to the freedom of slaves.) The latter examined him privately and recorded his evidence. Then he said that Margo should stay in his (Ato Balacho's) house. Three days afterwards, Ato Balacho, in reply to enquiry from Fitaurari Merdassa, said that Margo had disappeared. Fitaurari Merdassa complained to Dejach Walda Tsadik, Minister

[16460]

of the Interior, and learnt that Ato Balacho had sent Margo to Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan. Subsequently Margo escaped to Wallega Province, where he was caught and brought back to Ato Balacho. Then Ato Balacho said Margo had escaped again. It is not known what happened to him.

Two other sons of Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan, named Hamad and Ahmed, by a black mother, came to complain in November 1926 to His Imperial Highness, and gave him a written statement. His Imperial Highness told Betwadda Getachu to investigate. (Betwadda Getachu represented Abyssinia at Geneva in 1926; now Governor of Maji Province in South-West Abyssinia.) Result, nil; and, after waiting for three months, Hamad and Ahmed had to rejoin their father as the only alternative to starvation.

About five years ago the Abyssinian Government ordered that Fitaaurari Mohamed Wad Mahmud, the petty black chief of Dul, was to be arrested for obstructing English gold prospectors. Dejach Igazu, formerly Minister for Foreign Affairs and now Governor of Beni Shangul, and Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan were told to attack him. They enslaved about 2,100 blacks. Of these, 1,100 were kept by Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan and 1,000 were brought to Addis Ababa. During these five years Fitaaurari Mohamed Wad Mahmud's district (Dul) has been under Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan, and some of the latter's sons have sold more than 3,000 blacks from this district as slaves and continue to sell.

Of the 1,000 slaves brought to Addis Ababa, five escaped and complained in the court of justice of Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis in July 1926. The latter called Fitaaurari Mohamed Wad Mahmud. After enquiry, Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis stated that the reason for the attack on Fitaaurari Mohamed Wad Mahmud was his obstruction of the English, not to slave raid. Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis then ordered the return of the slaves to their districts. The five blacks then went to live temporarily in Fitaaurari Mohamed Wad Mahmud's house at Addis Ababa. Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis reported the matter to the Empress and His Imperial Highness, and expressed his opinion that these blacks ought not to be enslaved. The Empress and His Imperial Highness then directed that the slaves should be sent back to their district. Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis accordingly ordered Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan to repatriate the slaves. Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan refused. So Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis reported the refusal to the Empress and His Imperial Highness. They said the slaves must be repatriated. Then Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis died. Whereupon Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan claimed the five slaves before the slave judge, Ato Balacho, at Addis Ababa, and they were handed back to him. Meanwhile, Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan's son, El Mahdi, sold many of the slaves in Goha (Beni Shangul). A Beni Shangul man, named Mohamed Said, was imprisoned by El Mahdi, and died suddenly—presumably poisoned. El Mahdi recently sold 170 slaves, property of Mohamed Said. Some of Mohamed Said's sons have come to Addis Ababa to complain; result, nil.

During the last two years Sheikh Khojali-el-Hassan has given thirty, fifty and eighty slaves at different times to Dejach Beru. The latter came to Addis Ababa a month ago, and brought many slaves.

A. D. HOME

Addis Ababa, May 2, 1927.

Enclosure 2 in No. 144.

Consul Hodson to Mr. Bentinck.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Nile, March 25, 1927.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge receipt of your despatch dated the 24th February, 1927.

It is certain that slavery is still being carried on in the south-west of Abyssinia, and no improvement in the state of affairs in that unfortunate part of the world can be recorded.

On my recent journey from Gore to Mongalla I travelled through Dejazmatch Taye's province. This officer is a personal friend of mine and spoke to me freely. He told me that Dejazmatch Hailu Mariam, who is in charge of Shoa Gemira, was continually catching and selling slaves, and that he even sold his own tenants who were paying him tribute, so much so that many had fled over to Dejazmatch Taye for protection.

Passing from Taminjayaze to Gura Farda I found the country even more desolate than before. The small villages of Grine and Barahan were now deserted. I asked the Abyssinian officer who accompanied me why this was so, and he told me the old story that the soldiery would seize the children of the few Shako left, whereupon those remaining, where opportunity occurred, fled to the impenetrable forests of the Masango situated in the lowlands to the west.

The situation in Maji is worse. The Tishana are still in revolt and have murdered many people passing through their country. There have been a succession of small chiefs in charge of Maji, but none have remained long, as there are not sufficient natives left to support the soldiery. When these chiefs leave they do not, if possible, return empty handed.

I will quote two cases which are typical of the state of affairs existing. I have been fortunate in obtaining direct evidence, which is always a valuable asset in matters of this sort.

You will remember that some time ago I reported that a British subject, by name Jowse, and her daughter Tamila had been enslaved. The Legation took the matter up and orders were sent down for their release. I had before these reached me demanded the freedom of the mother, but not that of the daughter, as they said she had died. The mother always insisted that she did not think this was true. I was never able to satisfy myself definitely on this point.

Whilst I was on leave this poor woman was again caught by slave raiders in Maji itself. A rope was put round her neck and she was dragged away. She started to shriek, whereupon she was brutally murdered and her body left in the market place. The next morning she was inspected by my own men. They told me the corpse still had the rope tied round the neck. The names of some of my men who inspected it are Gabre, Juma, Gabra, Madine, Ato Desta, &c. The woman being a British subject makes this case particularly serious.

The other concerns the wife of one of my men, Gabra Mikael by name. She was a middle-aged woman of the Bako tribe and called Amate. Whilst her husband was away on trek she went one day to draw water close to Maji, whereupon she was seized by one Gabra Madin, a soldier of Maji Kuri. This man sold her for a rifle to a man in Gemira. Fitaaurari Gazain found her in this man's possession and took her to Dejazmatch Taye. She was a respectable woman, but all her clothes had been taken from her and she was naked when brought to him. I saw her myself in the presence of the Dejazmatch. She was now well-clothed and had found a new husband. She told me she was quite contented in her new environment and did not wish to return to Maji. Full particulars of this case can always be obtained from Gabra Mikael, who has been in my service for many years.

During my absence on leave two houses belonging to my men, situated outside the stockade, were burnt and the contents robbed, and the stockade was attacked on two occasions by small bands of robbers with the intention of robbing my cattle, but they were driven off without much difficulty.

A further report on my last journey will be forwarded to you in due course.

I have, &c.

ARNOLD HODSON.

Enclosure 3 in No. 144.

Consul Plowman to Mr. Bentinck.

(No. 28.)

Sir,

Camp at Jijiga, March 26, 1927.

IN reply to your despatch of the 24th ultimo, I have the honour to report that no appreciable change has taken place in slavery conditions as far as this consular district is concerned since I last reported to you on the subject.

2. There have been no instances of slave raiding for many years and open slave trading is no longer practised. A certain amount of clandestine trade in slaves brought from Addis Ababa and elsewhere outside the Harar Province goes on from time to time, but its volume is negligible, and there are signs that the more progressive elements among the Abyssinians are becoming less opposed to the idea of the eventual abolition of the status of slavery in their country.

I have, &c.

C. H. F. PLOWMAN.

[J 1419/55/1]

No. 145.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 75.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, May 31, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 91 of 28th May: Relations between Mr. Zaphiro and Ras Taffari.

In the circumstances I agree.

[J 1485/55/1]

No. 146.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 2.)

(No. 93.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, May 30, 1927.

MY telegram No. 91.

Ras Kassa told me that he had seen Ras Taffari since my last interview and that he saw* reason to anticipate that I should meet with difficulty if I should want Mr. Zaphiro back after a few months' holiday.

[J 1485/55/1]

No. 147.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 78.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, June 3, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 93 of 30th May: Zaphiro incident.

You should defer taking action on my telegram No. 75 of 31st May pending further instructions.

[J 1485/55/1]

No. 148.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 79.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, June 11, 1927.

MY immediately preceding telegram of 3rd June: Zaphiro incident.

You will have seen from my despatches No. 335 of 30th September last and No. 5 of 12th January that my object is to prevent considerations relating to arms or slavery from influencing our action over Tsana and *vice versa*. It is important to adhere to this principle as far as possible, and you should not allow a natural anxiety to create favourable atmosphere for Tsana negotiations to influence your attitude over the Zaphiro incident.

Your telegram under reply forms an ominous commentary on passage in your telegram No. 91, in which you reported that you had been unable to obtain Ras Taffari's promise not to make trouble when it came to Mr. Zaphiro's return from leave. You do not say how much importance you attach to Ras Kassa's warning, and I shall be glad to learn whether you regard it seriously.

I only agreed reluctantly to allow Mr. Zaphiro to proceed on leave in the belief that the incident would have blown over by the time he returned. I am, however, unwilling to force what might become a very serious issue at this moment, and you are therefore authorised to let him proceed forthwith.

* Contradicted below: see No. 151.

[J 1747/55/1]

No. 149.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 148. Confidential.)

HIS Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa presents his compliments to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of despatch No. 5 from His Majesty's consul at Gore reporting on slavery.

Addis Ababa, May 26, 1927.

Enclosure in No. 149.

Consul Walker to Mr. Bentinck.

(No. 5.)

Sir,

Gore, April 20, 1927.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 2/27/27 of the 24th February, which, owing to delays in the post, has only just been received, I have the honour to report that the only case of slavery brought to my notice occurred three days ago.

2. The servants of Mr. Hodson during his journey to Mongalla left their wives behind at Maji. The wife of Gabra Tadiq with her sister, both being natives of Maji and ignorant of Amharic, were returning laden from a local market when three men jumped upon them in the forest and throttled them. They were stripped of their clothes, and after having their plaited locks shaven off were branded on top of the head as a sign of slavery. By night they were driven north to Shako district, near Tabanja Yaj (the residence of Dajazmach Taiyyi). The sister is still there, but Walata Mariam was sold and brought north again to Gore.

3. Here, by some means as yet unknown, she passed into the hands of Kagnaznach Damis, the local "Commissioner of Slavery," who is said to have beaten her on her stating that she belonged to "the consul." She had heard vaguely that I lived somewhere near, and after cautious enquiries discovered where the consulate was. Then early on the morning of the 17th she took refuge with me.

4. One of the three who abducted her is named Shafarrau—a soldier under Dajazmach Taiyyi. Ras Hado states that all the followers of Taiyyi are indulging in brigandage, and of course it has for long been the habit for the soldiery in these desolated southern provinces to eke out their scanty pay by slave-dealing.

5. Meanwhile, the Ras has imprisoned the Kagnazmach Damis, confiscating his property till the end of the enquiry, and has ordered him to produce the man who brought the woman to Gore. It will be difficult to restore her to her husband till the arrival of a new consul.

6. The name of the sister is Dadukwoi, and efforts will be made to trace her in the district of Shako.

7. Owing to the secrecy with which this traffic is conducted it is difficult to say whether conditions are better or worse. No census has been taken of the population remaining in the provinces from which the source is derived, nor is official notice given on the disappearance of individuals. The majority of these slaves are probably driven by night by devious paths to the north of Abyssinia, where the demand is constant and the present machinery of government is inadequate to check the numbers of families in the forest villages. The compulsory registration of all present slaves would be a useful means of checking an increase, but, unless the commissioner were a man of character, the registering would be neglected. Trade and industry might bring about a change in these remote districts, which at present through lack of roads are cut off even from Gore.

I have, &c.

C. H. WALKER.

[J 1751/55/1]

No. 150.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 152.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, May 31, 1927.

WITH reference to my telegrams regarding the question of Mr. Zaphiro, oriental secretary to His Majesty's Legation, and ending with my telegram No. 80 of the 10th instant, I should mention that it is difficult not to believe that there is not more behind the matter than would appear on the surface, and that Ras Tafari or his advisers have not used the incident of Bishop Gwynne's indiscretion merely as a pretext. What is actually at the bottom of all the trouble it is impossible for me to say at present.

2. Last September, when Mr. Zaphiro was at Harrar, in the absence of Mr. Consul Plowman, Ras Tafari suddenly suggested to Mr. Maclean, His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, that he recall Mr. Zaphiro and leave the outstanding cases to be settled on Mr. Plowman's return, as, according to Ras Tafari, Mr. Zaphiro had not been getting on well with Dejazmach Imaru, the Deputy Governor. Mr. Maclean asked what the actual charge was, adding that if he were to recall Mr. Zaphiro such a serious step would have to be justified to the Foreign Office, and could not be thought of except on the most definite and proved grounds. Ras Tafari then said that he would write, but about a week later his Foreign Secretary telephoned that he did not propose to write and that Mr. Zaphiro could continue his work at Harrar. On my return from leave in November I told the Ras that his unsubstantiated charges had very much hurt both Mr. Zaphiro and myself. That it was fortunate that Mr. Maclean had taken the matter as he had done, because, had he acted on His Highness's suggestion, the Foreign Office and the Governor of Somaliland would most certainly have called for an explanation and have been very angry about it. I thought His Highness might like to make some sort of explanation towards Mr. Zaphiro, who, I thought, was his friend, and who had, so far as we were aware, always got on very well with Dejazmach Imaru. The Ras sent Belata Herui to me with Dejazmach Imaru's telegram. This was not a complaint against Mr. Zaphiro, but merely asked the Ras's advice because they had disagreed in judging a certain case. The Ras then explained to me that personal friendship was a private matter which did not enter into official questions; that on receipt of Dejazmach Imaru's telegram he had merely asked Mr. Maclean's advice as to whether it would not be a good thing to recall Mr. Zaphiro; and that when Mr. Maclean had explained to him that this could not be done he had dropped the matter. This explanation is not, however, in accordance with Mr. Maclean's recollection of the interview. Ras Tafari thereupon went out of his way to show himself friendly to Mr. Zaphiro and presented Mrs. Zaphiro with a horse. In the circumstances I thought it wiser not to press the matter further. I mention the case now, however, because at the beginning of the incident of the bishop, my Italian colleague questioned whether the Ras was really as true a friend to Mr. Zaphiro as we had imagined, and told me that he had heard some story of a disagreement between the two about some question at Harrar, and that he understood that the friendship had rather cooled since then. That was, however, not the impression which I had derived since my return from leave last November.

3. I have the honour to enclose extracts from the "Egyptian Gazette" of the 29th November, 1926, showing the extremely indiscreet nature of the bishop's remarks. As I have only one copy of the article I cannot forward it, but no doubt you will have received copies from another source. Ras Tafari was, it appears, shown the article by the merest chance. A foreigner who claimed to be Mr. Zaphiro's friend had stupidly shown it to an Abyssinian. The Abyssinian considered it necessary that the Ras should see it. Nevertheless, the Ras was markedly friendly to Mr. Zaphiro during Abyssinian Easter, and when I saw His Highness on the 25th April, as recorded in my telegram No. 59 of the 26th April, he was most friendly and seemed to take a comparatively sensible view of the whole matter, hoping, so far as I could judge, that the explanation from the bishop would clear up the situation. Ras Tafari then promised to take no official action until we had had another private talk on the subject. In spite of this, on the night of the 29th April, I suddenly received a note from the Foreign Secretary, of which I enclose a translation, suggesting that Mr. Zaphiro should abstain from official business pending a settlement. I at once telephoned to the Foreign Secretary asking him to call the first thing in the morning. Ato Berhana Markos called at 8.30, and I read out to him

the paragraph in my telegram No. 59 recording the promise Ras Tafari had made to me to take no action until we had again had a private talk. In view of this, I said, the note could hardly have been sent by Ras Tafari's orders. Ato Markos assured me that His Highness had dictated it. I therefore asked that he should withdraw it, adding that I could hardly telegraph to my Government to say that His Highness had done the very thing which he had promised me not to do. I added that I took exception to the word "sarrataina" being used in referring to a secretary of His Majesty's Legation. Ato Markos said there was nothing offensive in this; it meant in French "employé." Mr. Home, however, and the Abyssinian interpreter, had a different view, and Mr. Home, whom I called in, showed Ato Markos the dictionary, which gave the equivalent of "sarrataina" as "workman." Ato Markos then asked if I would give him a letter to His Highness sending back the note and asking him to withdraw it. This I did, and I enclose a copy. I suggested to Ato Markos that unless this were done it might be impossible for me to attend the official luncheon party which the Empress was giving that day at 12 o'clock, and that in that case I should let the Empress know the cause of my absence before luncheon. At 11.30 Ato Markos telephoned to me that in view of the promise that the Ras had made to me he had annulled both his note and my note. He added that the Ras's note had been *mal exprimée*. I then attended the luncheon party, at which the Empress was exceptionally friendly.

4. On the 3rd instant I had an appointment of several days' standing to see Ras Tafari and present the Tsana memorandum. In the morning the Foreign Secretary called to discuss various matters with me, and I suggested to him that possibly it might be preferable not to present the memorandum until the question of Mr. Zaphiro had been settled. Ato Markos deprecated any delay as otherwise I might not have another opportunity of seeing the Ras about the Tsana question until after the departure of the Duke of the Abruzzi, that is to say, after the end of May. I then told Ato Markos that as the Maharao of Kutch was arriving the following day, I relied upon His Highness to act as though nothing were the matter during the Maharao's visit. Ato Markos asked me when I saw the Ras that evening to make the suggestion myself, which I did, after we had finished with the Tsana question. To my surprise, the Ras was not prepared to agree straight away, but said he would have to consider the matter and perhaps consult the Empress. He would, he said, send Ato Markos to see me the next day with his answer. Ato Markos accordingly called on the 4th May, and told me that the Ras could not agree to my suggestion, and that he did not propose to invite Mr. Zaphiro to any of the functions to which the rest of the staff would be invited. I then suggested that in that case it would be better if I saw the Empress myself and explained the matter to her. Accordingly, on the following day, after I had presented the Maharao to Her Majesty, I remained behind with Mr. Home for an interview with Her Majesty in the presence of Ras Tafari. The interview was certainly more friendly in tone than I had anticipated, and certainly less stormy than Ras Tafari, to judge from his face at the beginning, had expected. After a long argument, conducted chiefly between Ras Tafari and myself, in the course of which I made it clear that unless the question were postponed I should not be able to attend the Ras's dinner party that night, the Empress and Ras Tafari finally said that they would think about it and let me have the reply in the afternoon, after I had presented the Maharao to Ras Tafari at his house.

5. Accordingly, in the afternoon, after the Maharao had left Ras Tafari, I remained behind and Ras Tafari then read to me a written communication saying that "in order to please me" and in order not to interfere with the visit of the Maharao, he would invite Mr. Zaphiro to the dinner party that night "as a secretary of His Majesty's Legation." I thanked His Highness and said that I appreciated the fact that he had done this to please me. I then read out to him in French your telegram No. 60, omitting the last sentence, as we had arranged in the morning that as it was going to be a disagreeable communication he would prefer that I should present it in the afternoon when the Empress would not be present. I left with him a copy and translation, which were received in sulky silence.

6. At the Empress's luncheon on the 7th May I let Ras Tafari know that I had received the bishop's explanation, and I suggested that I should communicate it to him after the departure of the Maharao. He begged me to send it to him that day if possible. An audience was then arranged for the afternoon of Tuesday, the 10th. After dinner on the 9th my Italian colleague suddenly called to warn me that a meeting had been held that afternoon between Belata Herui, Ato Markos, M. de

Bellefonds, the French legal adviser, and M. Auberson, the Swiss adviser. They had decided to advise Ras Tafari not to be satisfied with the bishop's explanation, but he saw me the next day to demand the departure of Mr. Zaphiro, and if I should refuse to put to me the choice between Mr. Zaphiro and the Tsana negotiations. M. Cora professed for the second time his readiness at any time to mediate if I thought his services would be of any use to me, for, as he had said before, he was at the moment in high favour owing to the approaching visit of the Duke of Abruzzi. He expressed the opinion, however, that if he were in my place, he would spontaneously offer to send Mr. Zaphiro on leave for several months, and he felt sure that at the end of this time the question would be forgotten. I pointed out that to send Mr. Zaphiro away would seem like admitting that he had said what he could not admit having said.

7. The following morning Belata Herui called about other matters and we naturally spoke about this question. I spoke very straight to him about the part he was reported to be playing in the matter, which he would not admit and he assured me on the contrary of his desire that the Ras and I should reach a friendly settlement that afternoon. He undertook to see the Ras before my visit and to remain within call during the visit. I at first saw the Ras alone and it was very evident that he had allowed himself to be influenced in an unfavourable sense. He was most difficult to handle and whilst insisting on his desire for good relations with England and for the continuation of friendship with myself, he hinted at some sort of official action in the event of our being unable to reach an agreement. Belata Herui was then called in and made a personal suggestion that Mr. Zaphiro should take leave out of the country for several months and that I should write to Ras Tafari an official letter expressing my personal regret at the indiscretions of my guest and embodying in my note such explanations as the bishop and Mr. Zaphiro were able to offer. Ras Tafari was disposed to accept this solution, but was much displeased when I said that I could not send Mr. Zaphiro out of the country without referring the matter to you. He finally reluctantly agreed to await your reply to a telegram which I said I would send. He added that this was now the third thing he had done "to please me," and Belata Herui then expressed the hope that I should do something to please His Highness by which he meant, send Mr. Zaphiro on leave.

8. I then sent you my telegram No. 80 of the 10th instant and retired to Dire Dawa for a few days rest before the visit of the Duke of the Abruzzi. When your telegram No. 72 of the 18th instant reached me, the Royal visit was in full swing and Ras Tafari was unable to attend to any business. Meanwhile, I saw Ras Kassa, who promised to see what he could do. I told the Foreign Secretary that it was difficult for you to understand why a small matter should be made into such a big one, and that you required further explanations from me. In the circumstances I thought that another interview with Ras Tafari would be desirable. Ato Markos then begged me to postpone my departure, which had been arranged for the 25th instant, and to see the Ras again after the Duke of the Abruzzi had left.

9. Accordingly on the 27th instant I had a long talk with Ras Tafari in the presence of Mr. Home and Ato Markos. His Highness seemed less difficult than on the occasion of the interview reported in paragraph 7 above. He was, however, very obstinate about the desirability of Mr. Zaphiro taking leave, and whilst not by any means closing the door against the possibility of his coming back, he would not commit himself to a definite promise to make no difficulties. On the other hand, I refused to make Mr. Zaphiro's departure on leave a condition of settlement, but said that if Mr. Zaphiro should apply for leave I would not prevent it. After a long talk the matter was left at that, and I again decided to postpone my departure in order to clear up the situation. In the course of conversation I pressed Ras Tafari to say whether he had anything against Mr. Zaphiro beyond the bishop's story, because as Mr. Zaphiro had denied having said what he was alleged to have said, it was difficult, especially for you, Sir, and for us all, to appreciate the Ras's attitude. His Highness would neither confirm nor deny, but wriggled out by saying that he was not going to be Mr. Zaphiro's accuser. I may here mention that I gather from Belata Herui that the Abyssinians or the Ras blame Mr. Zaphiro for the whole article, because they argue that the bishop could not, in the short time that he was here, have observed all the other things about which he had spoken. For instance, Belata Herui said, how could the bishop have observed that the Abyssinians were "a terribly drunken lot" and that there was "much intemperance amongst the clergy," unless Mr. Zaphiro had told him. I told Belata Herui, as I had already told Dr. Martin, that they might be thankful that the bishop had mentioned

Mr. Zaphiro instead of them as informants, or they would have been in chains. Dr. Martin thoroughly appreciated this fact! I may add that neither Ras Tafari, Ras Kassa nor Berhana Markos has attempted to deny the fact that slaves can be purchased in Addis Ababa. All that Ras Tafari could say was that I must know that he did not buy and sell slaves, and that the Abyssinian Government had issued proclamations against this. Ras Kassa said that Christian people did not deal in slaves and when I invited from Berhana Markos a denial of the bishop's statement, after a few moments' silence, he remarked that he had not come to discuss the question of slavery!

10. When I returned from my interview with Ras Tafari on the 27th instant I consulted Messrs. Maclean and Home. It appeared to us that there were only three courses open, either—

- (1.) That Mr. Zaphiro should himself apply for leave and depart with me when I go to Somaliland; or
- (2.) That I should ask you to recall him to avoid a more serious quarrel, endangering the success of our Tsana negotiations; or
- (3.) That I should refuse to allow Mr. Zaphiro to leave, but that he should remain on here; that we should face a big quarrel, resulting certainly in a considerable postponement of the Tsana negotiations and with the further result that no Abyssinian would dare to see Mr. Zaphiro and that the Ras would see that he was useless to this Legation ever afterwards. Thus, soon his position would be made so impossible that he would be compelled to resign, with considerable loss of dignity both to myself and to him.

We were all agreed that (1) was the best course in the circumstances, and I accordingly sent you my telegram No. 91 of the 28th instant. It appeared to us that we could not force Ras Tafari or any Abyssinian to see Mr. Zaphiro, and that if we were to keep the door open for his ultimate return and future usefulness at His Majesty's Legation, we felt and I feel most strongly that in fairness to Mr. Zaphiro (1) is the best solution. It must be borne in mind that we are not dealing with reasonable and civilised beings, but with swollen-headed children, thoroughly spoilt by the manner in which the European Powers have flattered them and vied with one another in seeking their favour.

11. There appear to me, Sir, to be two courses open to us in the future: either after a few months for me to say that I want Mr. Zaphiro back, which, with the help of Ras Kassa, I do not at present anticipate that I shall meet with great difficulty in obtaining; or that you should offer Mr. Zaphiro another appointment elsewhere, where his knowledge of languages should stand him in good stead, and that Ras Tafari should be made to realise that by his folly he has lost his best and perhaps his only friend in the Diplomatic Corps. In the latter event I think that Ras Tafari must also be made to understand that the threat of publicity contained in your telegram No. 60 of the 2nd instant is not merely idle words, and that the whole question of slavery in this country should be brought up in Parliament and the press. If, on the other hand, we should think it desirable that Mr. Zaphiro should return to this Legation after a few months' holiday, which is long due to him, it would be as well not to close the door on his prospects. You may, however, be able to bring up the question of slavery from Mr. Hodson's reports and from other information without referring to the incident connected with Mr. Zaphiro and the bishop.

12. I should add that in conversation yesterday Ras Kassa mentioned that there was "lightning about" at the moment. The question should never, he said, have been allowed to assume the big dimensions which it had assumed, but that, as Ras Tafari had mentioned Mr. Zaphiro's departure, it was now difficult to go back on this. He undertook to endeavour to see that I received a suitable acknowledgment of the note which I sent to Ras Tafari on the 28th instant (copies enclosed) closing the incident. I had previously shown Ras Kassa the draft of this note. I reminded Ras Kassa that, unfortunately, he was away when the incident occurred. Had he been here, I should certainly have told him about it earlier, and he would have prevented it assuming such serious dimensions. By the time he had returned to Addis Ababa things had already gone much too far. I thought, I added, that I might have settled the matter with Ras Tafari alone, but unfortunately intriguers had come in between us and made mischief. Ras Kassa seemed to be fully aware

of this, although Ras Taffari, when I pressed him, would not admit it. In the course of conversation Ras Kassa mentioned that he had seen Ras Taffari subsequent to my interview on the 27th instant, and he saw no reason to anticipate that I should encounter any difficulty in getting Mr. Zaphiro back after a few months.

I am forwarding a copy of this despatch to Cairo.

I have, &c.
C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 1 in No. 150.

Extracts from the "Egyptian Gazette" of November 29, 1926.

THEY are very warlike, proud and haughty; the nobles ride on mules, which are royal animals, and round every chief when he goes riding is a motley crowd of slaves with rifles. Position is estimated by the amount of slaves a man owns.

Slaves at £E. 10 each.

Mr. Zaphiro, the oriental secretary, told me that a slave is bought for £E. 10. They are miserable-looking people, some being the same as Abyssinians or darker, and some come from the Sudan. It is very cold up there, and these wretched people sit shivering in very scanty clothes; they are only used as hewers of stone or drawers of water, and are practically useless for any heavy work. A large number live on estates in the country, and grow corn and grain. The Abyssinians are a terribly drunken lot, as they make a very intoxicating drink out of honey, and there is even much intemperance among the clergy.

A Depraved Church.

We must remember that, though it is now but a dead and depraved kind of Church, the Abyssinians have held their own and kept their religion, though attacked on all sides, and they are very proud of being Christians. I saw a service in their cathedral, which is a beautifully thatched cluster of buildings, with paintings of saints on the walls. In many ways it is a copy of the old Jewish religion, as the Queen of Sheba brought a number of Jewish priests back with her from her visit to Solomon, who taught the people, and one still sees the priests dancing with cymbals and singing the psalms of David. There must have been much life in the Church long ago, as there are plenty of translations from both the Old and the New Testaments. I saw the Holy Communion service with the priests in gorgeous robes under an umbrella, a relic of pagan religion, which probably dates back far beyond Christianity.

The crude wall paintings are dreadful, mostly depicting the deaths of saints, one of a tortured body on a grid-iron, another of St. Bartholomew being flayed alive, and one depicting a man eating pieces of a body scattered around him, which I was told was a very notorious saint who was eating his wife.

An Ignorant Priest. (Now dead.)

I had a talk with a benevolent-looking old priest, but he seemed very ignorant. The Aboona, the head of the Church there, is a Copt. Since the 4th century, when the Abyssinians became Christians, they have always had Egyptian Aboonas as the head of their Church. The present Aboona is an ignorant fellah, the foe of missionaries, reactionary in his ideas, openly anti-foreign, and the greatest hindrance to progress in the country. He is much feared, for the people are very superstitious, and the Empress, too, does nothing without consulting the Aboona. To become a priest a man has to pay a dollar, and then he is a deacon and must learn Gees, the ecclesiastical language; he need not understand a word of it, but when he can say the liturgy he is promoted to the priesthood and ordained by the Aboona. These priests extort money from the people and continually trade on their superstitions.

Peaceful Penetration.

The only chances for Abyssinia lie in three ways, either by fighting to free the slaves, which would mean terrible war and bloodshed, and God forbid that such a thing should be necessary, or we must have peaceful penetration by the great civilised Powers whose interests border on Abyssinia, such as Italy, France and England, so as to bring in a proper Government administration, or we must help them by opening more schools and hospitals, and it will take at least fifty years to educate and civilise the bulk of the people.

Ras Taffari is an ardent reformer and is very keen about the progress of his country. He is sorry about the slavery, and said he would be glad if we would go there and open schools, which we should have to do without asking any formal permission, as the Government would refuse such permission, but if only we will help them, he says, the schools could be opened without a formal request.

Enclosure 2 in No. 150.

Ras Taffari to Mr. Bentinck.

(After greetings.)

Addis Ababa, April 30, 1927.

Mr. ZAPHIRO being an employee (worker) of the British Legation, instead of doing an act which will strengthen the friendship of the two Governments, he told to Bishop Gwynne a thing which was not pleasing to the Ethiopian Government, and the bishop published it in a newspaper, saying that Mr. Zaphiro had told him so. As our Government was sorry against Mr. Zaphiro, you had spoken verbally with His Imperial Highness on the subject. Although it is impossible to doubt what the bishop had said, yet you asked for another interview to discuss the matter again. I am instructed to inform you that you should see that Mr. Zaphiro should not come on every official business, until you come on another interview and until we decide what is necessary.

(Seal of Ras Taffari.)

Enclosure 3 in No. 150.

Mr. Bentinck to Ras Taffari.

Addis Ababa, April 30, 1927.

Your Imperial Highness,

I HAVE received with astonishment this letter from your Foreign Secretary, dated yesterday, on the subject of my oriental secretary, Mr. Zaphiro. In the interests of good relations between our two Governments, I have the honour to return it to your Imperial Highness and to ask you to cancel it in view of the promise which you made to me last Monday, and which I immediately telegraphed to my Government. I note with further surprise that you refer to an official of His Majesty's Legation and a fellow member of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George as a "sarrataina."

Enclosure 4 in No. 150.

Mr. Bentinck to Ras Tafari.

Your Imperial Highness,

AS I told you in the audience which I had with your Imperial Highness on the 25th April, Abyssinian Easter Monday, I much regretted that Bishop Gwynne, who was my guest a year ago and who was received with much courtesy by the Empress and by your Imperial Highness, should have made certain statements which were unfortunately published and which had given offence.

I have now the honour to inform your Imperial Highness that I have since received the authority of the bishop to deliver to your Imperial Highness the following message from his lordship:—

"The bishop deeply regrets that anything said by him at a private lecture, not intended for publication, should have caused offence to the Empress, Ras Tafari and the Ethiopian Government. He further regrets the error he made in introducing the name of Mr. Zaphiro in connection with slave trade, as he cannot definitely affirm what was the authority on which he based his statement."

I have the honour to add that Mr. Zaphiro now states: "I definitely deny having said what was reported about me in the newspaper."

I trust that your Imperial Highness will now be able to consider this matter as closed in the interests of friendly relations between us.

I avail, &c.

[J 1773/55/1]

No. 151.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 28.)

(No. 106.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, June 25, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 79.

My telegram No. 93 stated that Ras Kassa "saw no reason to anticipate" difficulty.

Ras Tafari has now written official letter to say matter is closed. I had undertaken that, on receipt of this letter, I would allow Mr. Zaphiro to proceed on leave at my request. Ras Tafari has authorised his Foreign Secretary to assure me that if I want Mr. Zaphiro back after some months he will not raise objection, but he adds that, though he will, of course, receive him officially as one of my Secretaries, he cannot treat him with the same intimacy as hitherto.

[J 1773/55/1]

No. 152.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 89.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, June 30, 1927.

YOUR despatch No. 152 (of 31st May) and your telegram No. 106 (of 25th June). I approve your attitude.

CHAPTER VI.—TSANA.

[J 24/24/1]

No. 153.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Murray.—(Received January 4, 1927.)

My dear Murray,

Addis Ababa, December 12, 1926.

YOUR letter to Maclean of the 21st October about a boundary to the Italian sphere arrived here on the 16th November—just three days before I did—and was left over for me to answer.

2. It seems to me that "the territory to be crossed by the railway" need merely be a narrow zone on each side of the railway—take the Chinese Eastern Railway as a precedent. I think to take the South Manchurian Railway as an example would be to give up far too much.

3. The recognition of an "exclusive economic influence in the west of Abyssinia" which has given rise to so much suspicion and criticism on all sides is a far vaguer term. Sir R. Graham was so insistent that this concession should be conditional upon the support of Italy that I derived the impression that that was the real reason why Colli's and my revised notes met with such a lukewarm reception from him. Nevertheless, we have already given this away to the Italians, as I pointed out in my despatch No. 221 of the 24th November. The term "west of Abyssinia" should certainly not include Southern Abyssinia, and I do not see that we can possibly be called upon to give up the region to the south of latitude 6°. I fear we have given away whatever remained to us as a sphere by the 1891 protocol, confirmed in 1906 to the west of the 35th meridian. Your theory as regards not giving up our influence in the territory whence raids are made must, I fear, fall through so far as this western portion of Abyssinia is concerned, for I can see no way out of it—we have given up the west.

4. As regards the eastern limit, we do not see why you should suggest 37° 30'. Would not 37° plus the area to be crossed by the (mythical) railway meet our treaty obligations? Why should the area include any part of the lake? I remember in London you drew a straight line through the lake, but I don't now remember why you drew it *through* the lake and not on its western shore.

5. I can, however, see no reason why we should give up any railway rights which we already possess by Menelik's letter of the 28th August, 1904, quoted in article 9 of our treaty of the 13th December, 1906, even though such a railway will have to pass through the Italian sphere. I think I mentioned to you when in London that this railway concession had been referred to in the conversation which I had with Sir R. Graham at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs at Rome. Not knowing whether the Italians had already raised this question with Sir Ronald, I did not express any opinion. Afterwards Sir Ronald told me it had never been raised, and suggested that I might raise it in London. I think you feel that in view of other means now open to us for reaching the Cape the question of this railway is not immediate. At the same time, I think it must be clearly understood that we have not given and have no intention of giving away a concession already obtained from Menelik. This falls, I think, under the category of concessions already obtained which are not included in our agreement with Italy. This agreement, I think it is clearly understood, only applies to requests for new concessions (your despatch No. 243 of the 16th July, 1926). As the proposed Jimma Railway, which would really be an extension west of Addis Ababa of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway, conceded to us by article 9 of the treaty of 1906, was never conceded to us by the Abyssinians, but merely by France and Italy, I suppose it can be argued that this comes under a different category, so that in the future we shall not ask for this concession ourselves (your despatch No. 279 of the 17th November, 1925). But if we have not scrapped the 1906 agreement, cannot we rightly claim that this railway still falls to us rather than to the Italians? I think your despatch No. 279 is somewhat too ready to abandon everything, and if we abandon this railway, do we not lend colour to the idea that we have scrapped the 1906 agreement to some extent if we scrap that part of it which refers to railways west of Addis Ababa, i.e., article 9?

6. I realise that you may now argue that by giving up our sphere in Western Abyssinia we have already scrapped a portion of the agreement of 1906 and that

my argument is thus not quite logical. But to this I reply that we distinctly mentioned the west of Ethiopia in our notes of December 1925, but did not mention either of our railways. Are we, nevertheless, to assume that one, at any rate, of these two railways has been abandoned by us and still to maintain that the agreement of 1906 stands? This much-disliked agreement was, in spite of my preference for its omission in our note, quoted in both, and so I think it is clearly upheld in both—besides, we have not asked the French to scrap it. We are all agreed that trade is still free to seek its natural outlet west into the Sudan and need not be driven by us north-east into Eritrea (your despatch No. 243).

7. I do not know whether you want to raise these questions at Rome now, or merely to ascertain clearly what we ourselves really mean so that we may be ready if and when the question is raised at some future date. We must then not forget that we have from the beginning anticipated our obligations under the notes (my despatch No. 221).

8. I will quote a minute by Maclean which I think is worth considering:—

"I do not see why we should *freely offer* all the territory suggested by Murray. Why not request the Italians to give their views as to what they meant by 'west of Ethiopia' and 'the whole territory to be crossed by the railway' and then argue matters out. They *might* not ask for so much, in which case we should reap the benefit, and they could not ask for more, so that it could not be disadvantageous to us."

9. It seems to me there is great force in Maclean's argument of letting the Italians first say what they meant by "west of Ethiopia." They certainly could not ask for more than we are suggesting offering them. But why talk any more about it? Why not wait and see what the Abyssinians have to say about Lake Tsana—but whatever you do, please don't exchange any more notes!

I am forwarding a copy of this letter to Khartum, as I see you are inviting the views of the Sudan Government.

Yours, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK

[J 44/24/1]

No. 154.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 7.)

(No. 2.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, January 6, 1927.

MY despatch No. 227.

In reply to private unofficial enquiry from me, Ras Taffari, after several days' consideration, has given me as his private opinion that when mourning ends moment will be opportune to reopen Tsana negotiations. If, he says, after two weeks I submit to him views of His Majesty's Government he will judge whether question can be finished [? group omitted] Central Government and myself or whether it will be necessary to summon chiefs from lake district for consultation.

In view of the above, I said I should ask your authority to reopen negotiations; he seemed relieved when I said I thought they would be a mere continuation of those which took place in London in 1924.

Before departure of Count Colli, Ras Taffari told him he was determined to reach settlement with me.

Have I your authority to reopen negotiations on lines sketched at Foreign Office meeting of 21st July (Part VI, No. 110)?

[J 60/24/1]

No. 155.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 10, 1927.)

(No. 811.)

Sir,

Cairo, December 28, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of a despatch from the Acting Governor-General of the Sudan, in which General Huddleston records his views on the points raised in your despatch No. 1249 of the 16th November, 1926,

regarding the delimitation of the proposed zone of economic influence in Western Abyssinia. I see no reason to dissent from General Huddleston's opinion that the limits mentioned in your despatch under reply are unobjectionable from the point of view of the Sudan Government, and I concur in his suggestion that the Italian Government should, at a suitable moment, be reminded of the agreement regarding the Gambella enclave, of the existence of which they must be well aware. Although it would appear unlikely that Italy would wish to oppose the continuance of the present arrangement, I suggest they should at the same time be informed that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, it cannot be held to infringe either the letter or the spirit of the recent agreement, and that we are consequently not prepared to introduce any alteration.

2. I have the honour to record my complete agreement with the views expressed by Sir Ronald Graham in his despatch to you, No. 927 of the 3rd November, a copy of which was sent to me under cover of your despatch No. 1249, and to express the hope that it may be found possible to postpone public discussion of this question until we have succeeded in securing the agreement of the Abyssinian Government to our Lake Tsana proposals.

3. I must confess that I feel a considerable amount of sympathy with the views expressed by General Huddleston in paragraph 5 of his enclosed despatch. I am aware that the concession question has been fully considered in all its aspects, and that, as a result, it was decided that the necessity for avoiding any action which might, however wrongly, cause the Italian Government to doubt our *bona fides* outweighed all other considerations. This attitude, strictly correct as it undoubtedly is, gives Italy, in practice, all the advantages she can hope to gain should the Lake Tsana agreement go through. It must not be forgotten that our recognition of the proposed Italian economic zone of influence is contingent upon our having obtained with Italian support our requirements at Lake Tsana. In view of the attitude of the Abyssinian Government up to date, it seems likely that we shall need all the help we can get, and it occurs to me that to give Italy in advance their side of the bargain is hardly the best way to stimulate energetic co-operation. My experiences during the Jaghbug negotiations have not left me with a high opinion of Italian diplomatic honesty. There is, in fact, it appears to me, considerable danger that our present policy may produce only lukewarm support from the Italian Government. Why, in fact, it may be asked, should they risk their own position with the Ethiopian Government on our behalf when they have already got the reward they might look for by so doing?

4. I draw special attention to this point, as there appears to be a danger that our renunciation may come to be considered by the Italian Government a condition of their support for our request to the Abyssinian Government, when, in fact, it is only applicable after we have definitely obtained our concession. I fully appreciate that the Italian railway concession is a secondary consideration to that Government, and that the economic concession is the object which they are really desirous of attaining. This, however, only adds force to my argument.

I have, &c.

LLOYD, High Commissioner.

Enclosure in No. 155.

General Huddleston to Lord Lloyd.

(No. 152.)

My Lord,

Khartum, November 26, 1926.

I HAVE the honour to refer to your Lordship's despatch No. 370, dated the 1st November, 1926, concerning the definition of the eastern limits of that part of Abyssinia in which His Majesty's Government propose to renounce their economic interests in favour of Italy.

2. Subject to one reservation, I have no reason to foresee any objection being eventually raised by the Sudan Government to the definition of the zone in question as lying to the west of longitude 37° 30' and to the north of latitude 6°.

The reservation I think it wise to make relates to Gambella.

Under the "Treaties between Great Britain and Ethiopia, and between Great Britain, Italy and Ethiopia" (No. 100 in Volume II of "The Map of Africa by Treaty," p. 431), which were signed on the 15th May, 1902, Gambella was "leased to the Government of the Sudan, to be administered and occupied as a commercial

station, so long as the Sudan is under the Anglo-Egyptian Government." The Sudan Government, in fact, so administer and occupy it, and its value to them is not inconsiderable.

3. I assume that His Majesty's Government has not contemplated the withdrawal of the Sudan Government from Gambeila, and the fact of its having been leased to them by the Abyssinian Government would, of course, preclude the Italian Government from demanding our withdrawal under the terms of the recent Anglo-Italian agreement except with the consent of the Abyssinian Government.

4. The possibility, however, occurs to me that the Italian Government might claim that, provided they could obtain that consent, we should be bound in honour to raise no objection to the transfer of our rights to them.

The point may not have arisen, but I feel that it would be expedient, when the time comes to define the Italian zone, to make a formal reservation in the sense that the Anglo-Italian agreement in no way affects our present status at Gambeila, which is determined by the treaties of 1902.

5. But I would also venture in this connection again to draw your Lordship's attention to a matter of wider import.

In his despatch No. 33 of the 21st February, 1926, Sir W. Sterry drew attention to the fact that the Foreign Office appeared to be treating the British undertaking to recognise an exclusive Italian economic zone in Abyssinia as having become absolute, whereas it had only been given contingently upon our obtaining the Tsana concession.

Sir W. Sterry concluded with the suggestion "that such an interpretation robs the agreement with the Italian Government of the greater part of its value to the Sudan; for, if Italy is to be regarded as already in possession of the most substantial part of the consideration promised for her assistance in the Tsana negotiations, she may well be content to allow such assistance to assume a very passive and half-hearted character." With this view I would wish to associate myself, and I trust it may receive the support of your Lordship.

I have, &c.

H. J. HUDDLESTON,
Acting Governor-General of the Sudan.

[J 44/24/1]

No. 156.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 2.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, January 11, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 2, last paragraph, of 6th January: Lake Tsana.

Yes. You will recollect, however, that objection has been expressed to a time-limit (see my despatch No. 329 of 28th September).

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 13.)

[J 3443/19/1]

No. 157.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 27.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 31, 1927.

IN your despatch No. 221 of the 24th November last you expressed apprehension lest our agreement with Italy might benefit non-Italian foreign concession seekers rather than the Italians. This point seems to be of considerable importance, and, if you are in a position to quote specific instances in which this has happened, I will consider the advisability of taking the question up with the Italian Government.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 225/24/1]

No. 158.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received January 31.)

(No. 4.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, January 6, 1927.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 2 of to-day's date, I have the honour to report that about a week ago, in the course of a private and unofficial conversation with Ras Taffari, I asked him to give me his private opinion as to whether he considered the present moment would be opportune to reopen the Tsana negotiations. I made it clear to him that it was a case of reopening and not starting fresh negotiations. Ras Taffari said the question was rather sudden. He would consider the matter and let me have an answer in a few days' time. I asked him if he trusted me, for, I said unless we were to trust each other it would be useless to negotiate and that it would be better that I should leave and someone else come in my stead. His Highness was most emphatic that he trusted me and that he had never given me cause to think otherwise. The conversation then drifted to the Anglo-Italian exchange of notes about which His Highness still seemed somewhat hurt. However, after I had endeavoured to make him look at the matter in its true light, he sensibly remarked that the matter was now finished and the conversation reverted to other subjects.

2. A few days later His Highness sent me a message by his Foreign Secretary. As the message was not very clear, the Secretary being merely a mouthpiece and unable to say more than blindly repeat a message, I asked for another private talk with His Highness. This took place yesterday. His Highness then made it clear that if, when the national mourning ends (in about two weeks' time), I submit to him the views of His Majesty's Government on the subject, that would be an opportune moment. When he had studied our views, he would then be in a position to judge whether a settlement of the question could be reached between the Government at Addis Ababa, represented by himself, and myself, or whether it would be necessary for him to summon the chiefs whose territories bordered on the lake to come to Addis Ababa in order that they might be consulted. This His Highness observed, would of course cause delay.

3. I told His Highness that, in view of the above, I would recommend to you that I be authorised to reopen the negotiations, as I was not at liberty to do so until I had received your instructions. I then told him that I relied upon his support in reaching a settlement and that, as he was already fully acquainted with our views, I did not think it ought to be difficult for us to succeed. I observed that the negotiations which he had held with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in London in 1924 had been interrupted. Here he remarked with a smile: "Unfortunately, by your agreement with Italy." I continued that he had since sent a Swiss engineer to the lake. He had presumably been able to study his report as well as that of Messrs. Graham and Black which I had given him, so that I thought we should merely continue the conversations interrupted since he was in London. His Highness seemed to me to be distinctly relieved at hearing this, and altogether his attitude was both friendly and encouraging.

4. I may here add that Count Colli, who left Addis Ababa on Christmas-day, told me before his departure that he had just had a long and intimate talk with Ras Taffari, in the course of which His Highness had told Count Colli that he was determined to reach a settlement of the Tsana question with me.

5. In view of the above, I venture to request your authority to open the negotiations with Ras Taffari in accordance with the recommendations of the meeting held at the Foreign Office on the 21st July last (see Part VI, No. 99). I observe at the end of the record of that meeting that the proposal to proceed on the lines recommended was to be discussed at a further meeting with Lord Lloyd. This was never held so far as I am aware, but I presume that you are already acquainted with his Lordship's views.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch to Cairo and Khartum.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 24/24/1]

No. 159.

Mr. Murray to Mr. Bentinck.

Foreign Office, February 3, 1927.

My dear Bentinck,

YOUR private letter to me of the 12th December arrived about the same time as the enclosed despatch from Lord Lloyd* commenting on Huddleston's views on the boundaries of the zone in which we have conditionally renounced our economic interests in favour of Italy.

As you imply, we do not regard the 1906 agreement as having been scrapped. On the contrary, Great Britain and Italy have both been emphatic in their insistence that their notes must be regarded as implementing, and lying within the framework of, the earlier agreement. Clearly, two parties to a tripartite arrangement are only free to make a bilateral agreement regarding the interpretation of parts of that arrangement with a strictly limited scope. The phraseology of the relevant part of the 1925 notes is, as you know, identic with the Italian memorandum of 1919. It is at least doubtful whether at that time it was the Italian intention to suggest that we should abandon such treaty rights as we enjoyed over that small part of Abyssinia lying west of longitude 35°. Be this as it may, there can be no question of our surrendering the enclave round Gambeile.

The exact extent of this enclave is defined by article 4 of the treaty with Menelik of the 15th May, 1902, but until the Italians have shown their intention of maintaining that the 1925 notes superseded, at least in their economic aspects, the provisions of the 1891 protocol, we might proceed on the assumption that our renunciation only applies to territory east of longitude 35°. On the wording of the 1925 notes it may prove impossible to maintain this position, but, in any case, we could resist a claim to hand over the actual enclave to Italy: firstly, because it is held under a lease from Abyssinia granted by the treaty of the 15th May, 1902, and we can certainly maintain that we are not entitled without Abyssinia's consent to agree to transfer the lease to Italy; and, secondly, because our undertaking as regards the Italian economic sphere of influence can hardly be held to mean that all trade between Western Abyssinia and the Sudan is to cease, and it is, I understand, only for the purpose of facilitating such trade that the enclave is maintained.

The exchange of notes limits the area in question by speaking of "the West of Abyssinia," thus excluding Central, Southern, and, of course, Eastern Abyssinia from the scope of the agreement. Taking the protocol of March 1891 as a basis, the "south" of Abyssinia might be regarded as that part which lies below latitude 6°, though when the Italian railway is constructed we shall have to regard Italian rights as further extending over the corridor through which the railway will pass.

It looked at one time as though some clue to the eastern boundary of the area might have emerged from the conversations last summer between Italy and France, who claims for Jibuti a hinterland extending westwards as far as Addis Ababa (longitude 38° 70'). But the French and Italians appear to have been content to leave it undefined, and it is unlikely that either side will want to reopen the question for the present. The agreement of 1906 merely laid down that the Italian railway must pass to the west of Addis Ababa. Orographical considerations demand that it should pass west of Lake Tsana. Longitude 37° just touches the western shore of the lake, and, if taken on the eastern boundary, would exclude the whole of the lake from the area to which the 1925 agreement would relate. As half the agreement relates to our Lake Tsana aims, the Italians would be justified in claiming that it would be illogical to bound their area on the east by a line as far west as longitude 37°. But, apart from our natural wish not to give away more than is required to fulfil our undertaking, it appears reasonable to regard a fairly symmetrical country like Abyssinia, with its capital in the geographical centre, as consisting of an eastern, central and western zone. Longitude 37° 30' represents just about the western limit of the middle third, and as it happens to bisect the lake it meets the point in the preceding sentence. Until the Italians produce convincing arguments to show that it should run closer to Addis Ababa, you might regard longitude 37° 30' as the eastern boundary.

To sum up, the area in which, given loyal Italian support over Tsana, you should refrain from supporting British concession-seekers may be regarded, until the Italians produce good reasons to the contrary, as bounded on the west by the Sudan frontier down to longitude 35°, and thence along that meridian as far as its

* No. 155.

junction with latitude 6°; on the south by latitude 6°, and later in the corridor south of that line to be traversed by the Eritrea-Benadir Railway; and on the east by longitude 37° 30'. Our first answer to Italian requests for more must be based on a reminder that, though the limits suggested above do not overstep those of the sphere of Italian reversionary interest specified in the protocols, Italy has obtained something in that area which she did not possess before, namely, a recognition on our part of her exclusive economic influence.

So much for the geographical limitations. The purpose of the tripartite agreement was the maintenance of the political *status quo*; no mention is made of the economic *status quo*. Thus, Great Britain and Italy had a more or less clean slate on which to write their economic arrangements, their mutual undertakings yet remaining within the frame of the tripartite agreement. The limitations on the economic scope result from concessions granted by the Abyssinians prior to the date of the exchange of notes and from articles 9 and 10 of the agreement itself. Apart from existing commercial concessions, which remain unaffected, there are the three railway concessions—Sudan-British Somaliland, Cape to Cairo and Jimma. As regards the Sudan-Somaliland Railway and the Cape to Cairo (Sudan-Uganda) Railway, our claims depend respectively on the Emperor Menelik's note of the 28th August, 1904, and the Anglo-Abyssinian Agreement of the 18th May, 1902. Italy cannot invoke the 1925 notes as giving her the right to build these two railways unless and until Abyssinia agrees to the transfer of the British rights to Italy. On the other hand, we could not undertake their construction without first coming to an agreement with Italy. The Jimma Railway depends on paragraph 1 of article 9 of the tripartite agreement; the consent of France is, I suppose, theoretically necessary for the transfer of our rights to Italy, but perhaps she has already given that consent by taking note of the 1925 exchange of notes. On this hypothesis, I agree generally with the points made in paragraph 5 of your letter, and, in dealing with your Italian colleague, I think you can take this and that paragraph of your letter as your guide in so far as concerns the economic limitations on the effect of the exchange of notes.

There remains the point made by Lord Lloyd, that by giving Italy in advance her side of the bargain we have deprived ourselves of power to stimulate energetic co-operation on her part. As you know, just about the time that the notes were being signed were approached by Messrs. Johnson, Matthey about the Prasso concession. We felt that the effect on Italy would be deplorable if we seized an eleventh-hour opportunity to snatch as many concessions as we could in the area to be affected by the notes. We accordingly decided that we must give an earnest of our good intentions, and told Messrs. Johnson, Matthey that we could not support them, and instructed you to refrain from supporting British subjects seeking similar concessions in that area. Lord Lloyd's point, however, is a good one, and, if Italian support is less loyal and vigorous than we have a right to expect, it may be necessary to remind them that we have anticipated our obligations and may have to reconsider our attitude unless assured of more effective backing on their part.

Yours ever,
J. MURRAY.

[J 277/24/1]

No. 160.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 3.)

(No. 9.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, February 3, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 2: Tsana.

Ras Taffari asks me to give him memorandum explaining exactly what we want, together with draft treaty. We will then discuss it unofficially. If we are agreed, he will submit documents to the Empress's advisers.

I propose to draw up memorandum which I shall submit to you, Khartum and Cairo before presentation.

(Repeated to Khartum, No. 9.)

[16460]

Q 2

[J 277/24/1]

No. 161.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 6.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, February 5, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 9 of 3rd February: Lake Tsana negotiations.

I approve your proposal.

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 32.)

[J 235/202/1]

No. 162.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd (Cairo).

(No. 120.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, February 7, 1927.

IN your despatch No. 29 of the 19th ultimo you reported that the Egyptian Government were considering the establishment of a consulate at Addis Ababa, and you alluded to the possibility that the Egyptian consul might be chosen as much with the object of watching developments in connection with Lake Tsana as of furthering legitimate Egyptian interests.

2. The difficulties with which His Majesty's Minister at that capital has to contend can only be increased if some mischievous Egyptian politician is able to use his official position as a screen from which to spy upon and interfere with Mr. Bentinck's activities. In these circumstances I hope that your Lordship may be able to persuade the Egyptian Government that in their own interests they will be well advised to appoint an officer who will do his best to co-operate with Mr. Bentinck in his endeavours to secure the Lake Tsana concession. You will doubtless consider the possibility of inducing thinking Egyptians like Sirry Pasha and Abdul Hamid Pasha Seliman to impress on the leaders of any Coptic delegation which may be sent to Abyssinia how important it is for Egyptian cultivators that Abyssinian prejudice against the use of the lake as a reservoir should be overcome at an early date.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 357/24/1]

No. 163.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 15.)

(No. 20.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, January 15, 1927.

I HAVE the honour to report that this morning I received a visit from Kantiba Gabru, who, as you are aware, was one of the Abyssinian representatives at the Assembly of the League of Nations last September. The Kantiba has a fair knowledge of English and seems to be most anxious for the progress of his country. Three of his children are being educated at the Swedish Mission at Addis Ababa, and he would gladly see more missions and schools in Abyssinia. He visited London three times: first with Ras Makonnen (Ras Taffari's father) at the time of King Edward's coronation; secondly with Ras Kassa for King George's coronation; and thirdly with Ras Nado at the close of the Great War. He has both coronation medals and the O.B.E. He appears to be filled with admiration for the British and particularly for British colonial administration. He visited Khartoum both before and after the British occupation of the Sudan and was greatly struck by the change.

2. The Kantiba told me that his home was near Gondar and so, of course, the question of Tsana was raised. Although formerly, he said, he was opposed to our scheme, he was now in favour of it, as he realised that it would benefit both countries, and he greatly hoped that I should succeed in reaching a settlement. But he wished me to understand the difficulties which Ras Taffari was likely to encounter from his own people as, if he were to obtain the concession for us, he would at once be accused of having sold the country to the foreigner. The people around the lake were ignorant, but they could not be ignored. Propaganda was necessary to explain the position clearly to them. I observed that I could not undertake this. He agreed that it would have to be undertaken by the Abyssinians themselves.

3. The Kantiba went on to enquire as to the level of the water, &c., in view of the interests of the local inhabitants and churches, and I explained that I had been most positively assured that it would never be higher than the highest point during the rainy season. He hoped I would be able to explain the matter satisfactorily to the Empress, as Her Majesty would be so greatly influenced by the Church. He thought, if the concession could be given to a company rather than to a Government, it would be much easier for the Abyssinian Government to agree, in view of local prejudice. I observed that I thought that an Anglo-Ethiopian company might meet the case and that the leading Abyssinians, such as Ras Taffari, Ras Kassa and Ras Hailu, might perhaps be represented on the board—possibly something on the lines of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway, from which Abyssinia had reaped nothing but benefits. The Kantiba said he strongly advised me to try to get the concession granted to a company rather than to the Government. That would be far more likely to meet with success and the Abyssinians might even themselves invest money in that company.

4. In passing, he observed that he thought our agreement with Italy had been a great mistake. I reminded him that he had himself told me what a lot of harm the Europeans had done each other by intriguing against each other. Happily my relations with M. Gaussen were very different from those of Sir John Harrington with M. Lagarde. We had now said to Italy: "Let us intrigue no longer, but work together." That was about all. The Kantiba said the agreement had been greatly misunderstood, and he quoted certain things from the Italian press. I observed that our own press and Opposition in Parliament had also misinterpreted it, but that your speech in Parliament had made matters clear. To this he assented.

5. We both took it for granted that Ras Taffari was in favour of the concession. I asked what view Ras Hailu would take, and the Kantiba said we should not meet with any difficulty from him. He seemed doubtful about Ras Gugsu. He asked me whether I thought Ras Kassa was in favour, and I replied in the affirmative. He spoke of the great importance for Abyssinia of friendly relations with England. I mentioned our frontier difficulties. But I added that if the Abyssinian Government were to grant the Tsana concession, it would do more than anything else to consolidate Anglo-Abyssinian friendship. The Kantiba expressed himself as always ready to help me in my task and to do what he could to remove misunderstandings if ever they should arise.

6. I was glad to meet the Kantiba, as Ras Taffari had recently spoken to me about him and of his good knowledge of English. His Highness was surprised to hear that we had never met. The Kantiba is a very religious man and, like Belata Herui, very friendly with and helpful to the Protestant missionaries. I think he is also anxious to imitate Belata Herui in acting as a kind of unofficial and self-appointed agent between the Abyssinian Government and His Majesty's Legation.

I am forwarding a copy of this despatch to Khartoum.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 493/24/1]

No. 164.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received February 28.)

(No. 45. Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, February 5, 1927.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 9 of the 1st instant, I have the honour to report that a few days before the interview arranged with Ras Taffari for the purpose of reopening the question of Lake Tsana, I went to see Ras Kassa to discuss various matters with him. I told him in the course of conversation that I was about to reopen Lake Tsana negotiations, and that I relied upon his support. I realised, I said, that Ras Taffari would meet with opposition in certain quarters, but I trusted that he would support Ras Taffari in carrying the negotiations to a successful conclusion in the interests of good relations between our two countries.

2. Ras Kassa hoped that the Divine blessing might rest upon our labours. I said that, as the scheme was to benefit so many people, I thought we could ask for Divine blessing. I was not, I said, going to ask the Abyssinian Government to do anything which I thought would be contrary to their interests, although I added (quoting your words in Parliament) the Abyssinian Government were the best judges

of what was in their own interests. In the course of our negotiations it might happen that I should suggest something which they might consider not in their interests, or, alternatively, they might ask something which I should not consider in the interests of my country. In that case, we should have to explore together some middle course acceptable to both countries. Ras Kassa begged me to have patience and to explain the matter in my negotiations in the same friendly manner in which I had explained it to him.

3. On the 1st instant I saw Ras Taffari at his house, and we talked in a kind of semi-official manner over a cup of tea. I asked him, now that he had been able to hear what the Swiss engineer whom he had sent to the lake had to say, and had also been able to study the report of Messrs. Grabham and Black which I had given him, what he had to propose in accordance with his letter to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald of the 26th July, 1924—extracts of which I read to him in translation.

4. His Imperial Highness had nothing to propose. I think that M. Zorg's report must have been so hastily and superficially drawn up that it cannot have been of much use, but I do not believe it to have been unfavourable (see my despatch No. 127 of the 29th May, 1926). His Imperial Highness asked what we wanted. I told him that, briefly, what we wanted was permission to build a dam and to construct a road up to it. His Imperial Highness accentuated his intention of fulfilling the promise which he had made to Mr. MacDonald in July 1924, and he then referred to the paragraph about building the dam and renting the surplus waters to the Sudan Government. He appeared to me to have no definite ideas, but to be feeling his way. He seemed to be contemplating the possibility of someone, neither Abyssinian nor British, building the dam. But he asked me to give him a memorandum embodying our entire requests, including the lines of a treaty. We would then examine the memorandum together unofficially and see if we could agree upon something likely to prove acceptable. After that he would submit the document officially to the Empress and her advisers.

5. His Imperial Highness spoke of the large profits to be derived by us from the cotton plantations, and he trusted that we would see that the Abyssinian Government received a fair rent in some proportion to our profits. I pointed out how difficult it would be to estimate these in advance before the whole scheme was in operation. His Highness trusted to us to play the game in this respect. I asked if it was then merely a question of price to be paid. His Highness said: "Not entirely." He was preoccupied about the fate of the churches on the islands in the lake. He had heard that they were bound to be submerged. I showed myself sympathetic upon this point, and told His Highness of the assurances I had received from Mr. MacGregor, who was an expert in such matters, that we could absolutely guarantee that the churches should not suffer any damage. I pointed out, however, that our engineers had studied the whole question thoroughly, and so they could give this guarantee, but this was conditional, of course, upon their constructing the dam themselves. If the work were not to be entrusted to them, no such guarantee could be given by us. The force of this seemed to appeal to His Highness.

6. I said to His Highness that I had been told that it would be much easier for the Abyssinian Government to agree if I were to ask for the concession to be granted to an Anglo-Ethiopian company rather than to His Majesty's Government. Was this the case? His Highness said that I had better put in my memorandum whatever we desired. If he should think that it would be easier to grant the concession to a company rather than to His Majesty's Government, he could always make a counter-suggestion to that effect. He begged me to have patience, adding that if we should be unable to agree upon any particular point one day, we might still be able to reach an agreement the next day. I fancy that here he had in mind the somewhat hasty way in which the previous negotiations had been broken off by Lord Curzon in 1923 (see Foreign Office telegram No. 63 of the 29th November, 1923).

7. His Highness asked why we wanted a road, and I told him that it was wanted to bring up materials for the construction of the dam. He seemed to have in his mind the idea that if we did not build the dam ourselves we need not build the road either. He did not mention the offer of £10,000 a year made by Sir G. Clerk to the Emperor Menelik in 1907 (see my despatch No. 32, Confidential, of the 25th ultimo), but he may revert to this at a later stage.

8. I feel, myself, that our chief difficulty will be to go back upon the letter of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald of the 14th August, 1924, in which he conditionally accepted Ras Taffari's proposal that the Abyssinian Government should construct the dam themselves. Dr. Martin, I may here mention, told me last spring that the idea of

the road was likely to give trouble owing to the fear of invasion. Another difficulty will be the question of price. In view of the offer made to the Emperor Menelik in 1907, which would to-day be worth a capital sum exceeding £200,000 at compound interest, and of the letters from Messrs. Bell and Aitkin to the Abyssinian Government in 1908, suggesting an annual sum of £200,000 as a fair price to pay for the lease of the waters (see paragraph 34 of my annual report for 1925). I fear we may find the Abyssinian Government will open their mouths rather wider than will be convenient to us.

9. I have the honour to enclose a draft memorandum with suggestions for a treaty attached, which, subject to your approval, I would propose to submit to Ras Taffari, as he desires and as recorded in paragraph 4 above. I told His Highness that before doing so I would have to obtain your approval. Should you be able to make the required alterations and corrections by telegraph, it would of course save time, but I realise that more drastic amendments will probably be necessary by you before I can show the document to Ras Taffari, which would render this course impossible. I should be grateful also for some latitude in the event of Ras Taffari suggesting changes of minor importance.

10. In my memorandum I have been careful to lay stress on the exchange of notes and the treaty with the Emperor Menelik for obvious reasons. The suggestions for the treaty are, as you will see, compiled both from the draft treaty enclosed in Mr. Russell's despatch No. 12 of the 1st February, 1924, and that enclosed in Lord Kitchener's despatch to Lord Grey No. 97 of the 17th May, 1914. I have also made a few additions and modifications which I consider necessary to meet Abyssinian mentality and susceptibilities. I appreciate the brevity of Mr. Russell's draft treaty, but I think to the Abyssinians it would look as though they were giving us everything and we nothing to them except money. I have tried to make the bargain look more equal.

11. Of Mr. Russell's draft treaty I have made articles 1 and 2 into one article, omitting the word "control," which might be misinterpreted here, and which is met by the word "maintain." I have suggested in article 2 that the Ethiopian Government should themselves guarantee the safety of the labourers, works, &c. A request by us for guards would only increase suspicion, and it is, after all, to the Ethiopian Government that we must look for the protection of our legations and consulates, and their officials guard the French railway and guarantee as far as possible the safety of the passengers. I have also purposely omitted the words "lease of land" in Mr. Russell's article 4, as it might be misunderstood. Permission to erect the buildings, &c., as in my article 3 would seem to give us all that is necessary. "Small steamers" is less likely to cause suspicion in my article 5 than "steamers" suggested in Mr. Russell's article 6. Whilst endeavouring to keep the treaty short, I have considered it highly desirable to insert part of the preamble of Lord Kitchener's draft as well as his articles 6, 7 and 11 in a modified form. Some assurance, on the lines of Lord Kitchener's article 11 (article 11 in my draft) must, I think, be given by us, as well as assurances about the churches (my article 9) since so much importance is attached to this in Abyssinia. The sentence between brackets in paragraph 7 of my memorandum beginning "if at any time," &c., and ending "prevent this," you may think would be better said verbally rather than inserted in the text of the memorandum and suggested treaty, but the objection to saying this instead of writing it is that Ras Taffari may forget to repeat what I say to the Crown advisers. I have made a bid for the favour of local opinion in the neighbourhood of the lake, to which the Abyssinians tell me they are bound to give heed.

12. I have had considerable difficulty in drawing up article 12. I feel that any offer made by us will be a point of departure for bargaining purposes, but at the same time I do not wish to begin by making offers which, in view of all that has been said in the past, will not appear to be serious. In paragraph 9 of Foreign Office memorandum of the 6th April, 1925, I noticed that the offer previously authorised by the Empire Cotton Growing Corporation remained open. This was defined in paragraph 10 of Foreign Office memorandum of the 24th March, 1925, as three sums of £50,000, £150,000 and £30,000 respectively. I have slightly reduced these figures for bargaining purposes, but I trust I may be given latitude to go to the maximum if necessary without reference to you. I have not been able to reduce the figure under heading (c) to the £10,000 a year suggested in paragraph 6 of Foreign Office memorandum of the 4th August, 1926, for the reason that in a conversation recorded in Mr. Russell's despatch No. 55 of the 31st May, 1923,

£20,000 a year was mentioned by him to the French adviser to the Abyssinian Government as having been suggested as a reasonable rent for the dam, whilst £10,000 a year was already offered by us to the Emperor Menelik in 1907 for reasons which it is difficult to appreciate. In Lord Kitchener's despatch to Lord Grey No. 97 of the 17th May, 1914, the sum of £20,000 was considered "a small payment for the great advantages accruing from the control of this vast water supply." I have not suggested any limit of time to our payment in article 12 (c) for fear the Abyssinian Government might wish to limit the whole concession (see your telegram No. 2 of the 11th January last). From the context it seems clear that our payment would of course be contingent upon the proper observance of the treaty. In the last paragraph of article 12 I have endeavoured to find some sort of phraseology to meet Ras Taffari's remarks recorded in paragraph 5 above, and my reply, as to the difficulty of fixing any sum in advance. This clause might also be preferable to an offer exceeding £20,000 a year for rent in case the whole Tsana scheme should unfortunately not come up to general expectations (see paragraph 5 of my despatch No. 98, Confidential, of the 3rd May, 1926). You will of course be the best judge whether we should suggest in this paragraph, as in article 10, that the decision should rest with a joint commission appointed by the two Governments or with a commission appointed by the League of Nations.

13. Should the Abyssinian Government put forward exorbitant financial or other unreasonable demands such as to endanger the whole scheme, I should be glad to learn whether it would be possible to give a hint about constructing a dam at or near Roseires? I could add that in case we should be driven to adopt this alternative scheme, the Abyssinian Government would not only lose the money offered by us but they would also forfeit the friendship of His Majesty's Government.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch to Cairo and Khartum.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 1 in No. 164.

Mr. Bentinck to Ras Taffari.

(After Greetings.)

WITH a view to strengthening still further and placing upon solid and permanent foundations the friendship happily existing between His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Imperial Government of Ethiopia and basing himself upon article 3 of the treaty concluded between His Majesty the Emperor Menelik II, King of Kings of Ethiopia, and the representative of His Majesty King Edward VII, on the 15th May, 1902, His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa has the honour, by direction of His Britannic Majesty's Government, to ask the Imperial Ethiopian Government to accord to His Britannic Majesty's Government, acting on behalf of the Government of the Sudan, the necessary permission to construct, across the head water of the Blue Nile at the outlet of Lake Tsana, the works contemplated at the time of the above-mentioned treaty with the Emperor Menelik.

2. As the Imperial Ethiopian Government are well aware, since the beginning of the world the waters of the Nile have flowed through the Sudan and Egypt, and have been used free from time immemorial, giving life and prosperity to millions of people. Every rainy season the surplus waters of Lake Tsana, however, have flowed away into the sea without it having been possible to use them to the best advantage for purposes of cultivation owing to insufficient control.

3. The importance of the waters of the Blue Nile for the prosperity of the millions of inhabitants of the Sudan, of Egypt, and, it may be said, of mankind in general was recognised, not only by the British Government, but also by the Emperor Menelik, when, on the 18th March, 1902, before the conclusion of the treaty above referred to, His Majesty authorised M. Alfred Ilg to exchange notes with Sir John Harrington, the representative of His Majesty King Edward VII, whereby His Majesty the Emperor Menelik promised that, "il n'y aura aucune intervention pour les eaux du Nil bleu et du lac Tsana excepté en consultation avec le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique et le Gouvernement du Soudan; qu'en cas d'une telle intervention, toutes les autres conditions étant égales, préférence va être donnée aux propositions du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique et du Gouvernement du Soudan; et que Sa Majesté l'Empereur Ménélik n'a aucune intention de donner

une concession regardant le Nil bleu et le lac Tsana à d'autres qu'au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique et au Gouvernement du Soudan ou à un de leurs sujets."

4. In fulfilment of their duty towards the peoples of those lands through which the Blue Nile flows, to foster in every way the development of cultivation, His Britannic Majesty's Government have, as the Imperial Government are well aware, long been desirous of effecting the control, hitherto lacking, of the waters of Lake Tsana, in order that the surplus should not run to waste. The most effective method of achieving this control has appeared to His Britannic Majesty's Government to be the construction of a dam at the outlet of that lake.

5. His Britannic Majesty's Government have, therefore, instructed His Majesty's Minister to approach the Imperial Government of Ethiopia in order to reach an agreement with them from which the people of Ethiopia no less than the people of the Sudan and of Egypt may derive benefit.

6. In the hope of arriving at such a friendly arrangement so beneficial to all concerned, His Majesty's Minister has the honour to submit to the Imperial Ethiopian Government for their favourable consideration and approval, the attached suggestions for a treaty. It is hoped that a treaty of this nature will satisfy the interests of the inhabitants of the lands watered by the Nile, which the Imperial Ethiopian Government no less than the British Government are bound to safeguard.

7. His Britannic Majesty's Government are anxious to begin at an early date the important works for which they have so long waited, and they are happy to be in a position to assure the Imperial Ethiopian Government that the churches in and around the lake, whose interests they have had under careful and sympathetic consideration, shall not suffer damage from the dam. If at any time there should appear to be any likelihood of the flood limit of the lake being passed, the gates at the dam would at once be opened so as to prevent this. Nor will His Britannic Majesty's Government lose sight of the interests of the local inhabitants, whose prosperity and progress may, it is hoped, benefit from the works in contemplation.

Enclosure 2 in No. 164.

Suggestions for a Treaty.

BY article 3 of the treaty signed at Addis Ababa on the 15th May, 1902, between the representative of His Majesty King Edward VII, &c., and His Majesty the Emperor Menelik II, &c., His Majesty the Emperor Menelik II, &c., engaged himself towards the Government of His Britannic Majesty not to construct, or to allow to be constructed, any work across the Blue Nile, Lake Tsana, or the Sobat, which would arrest the flow of their waters into the Nile, except in agreement with His Britannic Majesty's Government or the Government of the Sudan. Therefore His Britannic Majesty's Government propose to suggest to the Imperial Ethiopian Government that a treaty be concluded upon the following lines:—

His Britannic Majesty's Government will ask the Imperial Ethiopian Government—

1. To permit His Britannic Majesty's Government to construct and maintain a dam across the head waters of the Blue Nile at the outlet of Lake Tsana for the purpose of regulating the flow of water from that lake.

2. To permit the entry into Abyssinia of the engineers and labourers, skilled and unskilled, who may be necessary for the construction and to guarantee the safety of all those employed in the works and to see that they are unhindered in the execution of their duties, as well as to guarantee the safety of the works themselves. His Britannic Majesty's Government will give preference to local labour as far as possible.

After the completion of the dam His Britannic Majesty's Government will see that the permanent staff is limited to the smallest number of engineers and assistants compatible with the proper operation and care of the dam.

3. To permit the erection of buildings necessary for the aforesaid engineers and labourers, and for storehouses, offices, wharves, &c., in connection with the dam.

4. To facilitate His Britannic Majesty's Government in obtaining by purchase materials such as stone, timber, &c., in the neighbourhood of the lake for all work in connection with the dam.

[16460]

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5. To permit His Britannic Majesty's Government to place small steamers and boats on the lake for the transport of materials required in connection with the dam.

6. To permit His Britannic Majesty's Government to construct and maintain a road between Gallabat and Delgi for the purpose of transporting materials necessary for the dam. These materials, including explosives for blasting purposes, to be imported free of duty. His Britannic Majesty's Government will not allow their subjects to introduce any materials of war without the specific permission of the Imperial Ethiopian Government. This road will be open for general use.

7. To permit His Britannic Majesty's Government to erect and maintain at their own expense a telegraph line from Gallabat, through Delgi, to the dam. This line will be at the disposal of the Imperial Ethiopian Government free of charge, should they at any time wish to use it.

8. The riparian rights of the inhabitants dwelling on both sides of the Blue Nile throughout its length in Ethiopian territory to use these waters for domestic purposes, as well as for the cultivation of the food crops necessary to their own subsistence, will (certainly) not be questioned by His Britannic Majesty's Government. But it is understood that no attempt will be made to arrest, divert or obstruct in any way the flow of the Blue Nile or its tributaries in a manner contrary to article 3 of the treaty with the Emperor Menelik of the 15th May, 1902.

9. His Britannic Majesty's Government will bind themselves so to construct and control the dam that the waters of the lake shall never rise higher than the highest level hitherto recorded in the rainy season. His Britannic Majesty's Government will consequently be able to give a full guarantee that the churches on the islands in, and on the banks of, the lake shall not suffer damage from inundation.

10. If at any time the waters of the lake should be raised or lowered by the dam to such an extent as to affect the proprietary or cultivators' rights on the borders of the lake, compensation will be paid by His Britannic Majesty's Government, in accordance with the findings of a (joint commission appointed by His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Imperial Ethiopian Government) or (commission appointed by the League of Nations).

11. It will be distinctly understood that the rights accorded in the above articles to construct works for the control of the water supply at Lake Tsana and the Blue Nile shall not imply any encroachment whatever upon Ethiopian sovereignty. This treaty will in no way affect the existing entire independence of the Empire of Ethiopia, the maintenance of which is a cardinal point in the policy of His Britannic Majesty's Government.

12. In consideration of the concession which it is hoped the Imperial Ethiopian Government will be able to grant, and in addition to the guarantees and assurances which, as stated above, His Britannic Majesty's Government are prepared to give, His Britannic Majesty's Government will also pay to the Imperial Ethiopian Government:—

- (a.) £30,000 on conclusion of the present agreement.
- (b.) £100,000 on completion of the dam.
- (c.) £20,000 yearly from the 11th September (Abyssinian New Year's Day) after the completion of the dam.

After the expiration of the first five years' operation of the dam a (joint commission) (commission of the League of Nations) will be constituted to decide what share (portion) of the profits accruing to the Sudan Government shall be paid to the Imperial Ethiopian Government.

[J 576/24/1]

No. 165.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 8.)

(No. 56.)

HIS Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of telegram No. 14 from the Governor-General of Sudan, dated the 9th February, and of telegram No. 12, to the Governor-General, Sudan, dated the 11th February, respecting Lake Tsana concession negotiations.

Addis Ababa, February 15, 1927.

Enclosure 1 in No. 165.

Governor-General of Sudan to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 14.)

(Telegraphic.)

Khartum, February 9, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 9.

Please note following points, which may be useful to you in preparing your memorandum:—

- (a.) That general scope of scheme is still undetermined and that there are at least two very different alternatives to be studied.
- (b.) The actual engineering works and programme of execution are not yet planned.
- (c.) The only leading feature known for certain is that the lake will not be raised above natural flood levels.

2. I suggest, therefore, following points for your notice:—

- (a.) Confining explanation of our intentions to saying that we want to build a dam that will hold the lake up to its natural high flood level for a few months and to deepen the outfall of the river to the extent necessary to enable stored water to be used beneficially in the Sudan and Egypt.
- (b.) Explain that before works can be started another [? group omitted] will have to pay short visit to plan working.

3. What we want to secure is an option to build works which would be kept alive for the period necessary for full and complete study. We could pay, say, £E. 10,000 per annum during the option period, but no part of any larger sums which have to be paid ought to be payable until work actually commences.

4. The above are suggestions only. I understand you will, in any case, submit memorandum to London, Cairo and myself for final approval.

Enclosure 2 in No. 165.

Mr. Bentinck to Governor-General of Sudan (Khartum).

(No. 12.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, February 11, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 14.

Draft memorandum was sent to Foreign Office, you and Cairo a few days ago in my despatch No. 45 of 5th February. When received please telegraph your observations to Foreign Office and to me. I shall await Foreign Office instructions before taking steps.

As regards paragraph 2 (b), I think our main concern must be to get treaty signed whilst the moment seems not too unfavourable. If we can once secure permission to construct, visit of another expedition should not prove difficult. I am against making any payment until treaty has been signed and, if possible, I think annual payments should only begin after work is completed.

[J 493/24/1]

No. 166.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd (Cairo).

(No. 63.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, March 9, 1927.

MR. BENTINCK'S despatch No. 45 of 5th February: Tsana negotiations.

1. Proposed explanatory memorandum appears suitable, subject to following modifications, reasons for which are explained below. Paragraph 1: Substitute "arrange for construction" for "to construct" and insert "of" before "the works." Paragraph 4: add "and the deepening of the river channel for a short distance below the dam." Omit paragraph 6 altogether. Paragraph 7: substitute "to arrange for the construction" for "to begin" and insert "of" between "date" and "the." Before "If" insert "The effect of the dam will be to maintain

[16460]

surface of lake at its normal high level for a few months each year." At end of paragraph add: "Before these works can be started British engineers will have to visit Lake Tsana for a short time in order to prepare detail plans." Article 11 of draft treaty, with necessary verbal modifications, should be incorporated in the memorandum.

2. As regards procedure, it appears to me that we should be well advised to proceed by stages. First stage would be unofficial communication to, and discussion with, Ras Tafari of amended memorandum. If acceptable to him and Empress, the memorandum would be communicated officially in the form of a note, to which the Abyssinian Government would return a brief reply granting permission requested in paragraph 1 of memorandum, and asking Mr. Bentinck to suggest suitable text for formal concession agreement. Abyssinian reply might follow general lines of Menelik's note of 8th August, 1904, to French Minister authorising construction of Dire Dawa-Addis Ababa Railway. This would bring us to second stage.

3. Suggestions for treaty forming second enclosure in despatch under reference appear to be too detailed for communication until first stage is successfully achieved. For purpose of second stage, however, further particulars will have to be at Mr. Bentinck's disposal. Form which concession agreement will eventually take must depend (a) on method adopted for financing construction of reservoir; (b) on wishes of Abyssinian Government; but, in general, the contract of 30th January, 1908, transferring the Ilg concession of 1894 to new Ethiopian railway company provides useful model, form of which should be unobjectionable to Abyssinians. It covers clauses 3, 4, 7 and most of 6 of Mr. Bentinck's draft treaty. If actual text of relevant passages can be adapted it will save difficulties and uncertainties which may otherwise arise in connection with Amharic text, whilst clauses 2, 5, remainder of 6, 8 and 9 of Mr. Bentinck's draft treaty can be added. Expediency of clause 10 is doubtful; for one thing, it may lead Abyssinians to suspect value of assurance in clause 9, and it had better be omitted unless Ras Tafari presses for something of the kind. Clause 11, as already explained, should figure in memorandum and so disappear from concession agreement, whilst clause 12 will, as explained below, probably take a different form.

4. In raising money for a work of this kind, on which will ultimately depend the livelihood of a considerable population, it would seem better to avoid as far as possible making appeal to those whose interests would be mainly speculative. My idea would be an Anglo-Ethiopian syndicate, of which at least 55 per cent. of capital would have to be held by British and Sudanese interests. Fact that for some time after reservoir is built stored water will chiefly be used by Egypt might be met by allowing Egyptian Government to take up a considerable proportion of capital on condition that it would be repurchasable by Sudan Government at par over a period of years commencing, say, five years after completion of dam. The remaining share might be offered to Abyssinian Government, though as it appears unlikely that they would ever be willing actually to put money into the undertaking, their shares might take the form of founders' or vendors' shares, *cf.* article 15 of Ilg concession of 9th March, 1894.

5. The manner in which interest on ordinary shares and interest and sinking fund for debentures, if any, is to be provided calls for careful consideration. Several methods suggest themselves, such as (a) flat rate per 1,000 cubic metres of water stored per annum; (b) cess per feddan of land developed in Gezira over and above area under irrigation immediately before reservoir comes into use; (c) allocation of definite percentage of value of cotton grown on the additional area developed by means of reservoir.

6. If payments to Abyssinian Government other than cash payments on conclusion of concession agreement can be given the form of interest on shares, whether ordinary or vendors' shares, it would, I think, be better than arrangement suggested in article 12 of Mr. Bentinck's draft treaty.

7. Please consult Sudan Government and ascertain whether they concur in procedure suggested in paragraph 2 of this telegram. If so, it would be of great assistance if outlines of concession agreement could be worked out by them embodying their views on allocation of capital and clauses of Mr. Bentinck's draft treaty which they consider necessary. If they agree with procedure suggested above and with terms of Mr. Bentinck's explanatory memorandum as amended, no time need be lost, as it will not be necessary for him, in speaking with Ras Tafari, to go into details of concession agreement (second stage) until first stage of negotiations has been successfully surmounted.

8. Object of most of above suggestions is to make it clear not only to Abyssinians, but to world, in case question of Tsana should ever come before League of Nations, that what we are asking is (a) no more than Menelik's promise entitles us to expect, and (b) in form, and so far as possible in substance, is closely analogous to what he willingly conceded to another Power to the great benefit of his country. (Repeated to Addis Ababa, No. 26.)

[J 680/24/1]

No. 167.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 18.)

(No. 28.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, March 17, 1927.

(R.) YOUR telegram No. 63 to Cairo.

I am profoundly disappointed, and I submit following for your consideration:—

1. Question of procedure is one with which I venture entirely to disagree. Ras Tafari asked me to give him memorandum stating fully everything we wanted and would offer. My covering memorandum does not tell him more than he has already known for many years.

Its presentation without suggestions for a draft treaty will be pointless and create suspicion.

Ras Tafari will certainly not be able to submit memorandum for consideration to Empress and chiefs or to give me any reply until we are prepared to offer satisfactory *quid pro quo*. I must be in a position to lay all our cards on the table, and if our minds are not yet made up as to what we can offer, I feel we cannot proceed.

2. What is your objection to words "to construct" which were in Mr. Russell's draft treaty and in Anglo-Italian notes? I ought to be prepared in case Ras Tafari should ask this.

3. I am not in favour of asking in memorandum for engineers to visit lake. Obviously this will be necessary once the concession is granted, and surely the greater includes the less (see my telegram No. 12 to Khartum).

If necessity should become apparent in the course of negotiations we could suggest it then.

4. I understand Ras Tafari dislikes French railway contract and would never have agreed to it himself.

I might refer to it if he criticises my scheme, which seems, however, to embrace all we have wanted since 1914, but otherwise I would prefer to leave him to bring it up as a counter-suggestion if he wished it.

5. I see no objection to omission of article 10 and insertion of article 11 at end of memorandum. But I consider a definite cash offer on lines of first part of article 12 most essential. In all our discussions at Foreign Office idea of offer on these lines has been adhered to, and unless we are prepared now to make such a cash offer I fear that all my efforts will be useless (see my despatch No. 45, paragraphs 5, 8, 12, and despatches and memoranda referred to in those paragraphs).

6. As regards second part of article 12 of my draft treaty, my idea would be now to hand to Ras Tafari whole memorandum with draft treaty attached, including first part of article 12. If second part is not ready I could then explain to him that Sudan financial experts were considering scheme for a further offer of participation in profits *in addition to that already made* in order to meet his request contained in paragraph 5 of my despatch No. 45, but that this need not delay his consideration of our whole scheme. (End of R.)

7. I earnestly beg that whatever financial offer we are ultimately able to make on these lines it may be couched in baby-like simplicity. Otherwise Ras Tafari will not understand it, but will not like to say so. He will then consult someone perhaps hostile to us, or he will at once become suspicious and start hedging.

(R.) Ras Kassa is still waiting in Addis Ababa.

In view of this the sooner I can present whole memorandum with draft treaty the better.

(Repeated to Khartum, No. 17. Please repeat to Cairo.) (End of R.)

[J 716/24/1]

No. 168.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 22.)(No. 93.)
(Telegraphic.)

Cairo, March 22, 1927.

ADDIS ABABA telegram No. 28.

My immediately following telegrams contain texts of two telegrams received from the Sudan, the first written before, the second after, the receipt of Mr. Bentinck's telegram under reference. I am meeting Governor-General at Wady Halfa on 31st March, and will telegraph my views after full discussion with him. In the meantime I should be grateful for any observation you may care to make.

(Repeated to Khartum and Addis Ababa.)

[J 717/24/1]

No. 169.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 23.)(No. 94.)
(Telegraphic.) R.

Cairo, March 22, 1927.

FOLLOWING received from Khartum:—

"Addressed to High Commissioner for Egypt, No. 21. Repeated to Addis Ababa, No. 41.

"Your telegram No. 19.

"1. I approve paragraph 1 of Foreign Office telegram No. 63 subject to following further modifications: Mr. Bentinck's paragraph 4; deepening will be necessary in the lake as well. Amendment should read: 'and deepening channel where necessary near dam.' Mr. Bentinck's paragraph 7: omit words 'at an early date' and also the words 'for a short time' from addition proposed by Foreign Office.

"2. I approve proposal in paragraph 2 to divide negotiations into two stages. I think it particularly important that starting point should be promise of concession to His Majesty's Government, leaving the latter to arrange formation of company if necessary.

"3. I will endeavour to work out concession agreement as proposed in paragraph 7, but exact form must depend largely on course of local negotiations. Conduct of these on present four-cornered basis offers considerable difficulties, and I propose following procedure:—

"Firstly to settle main line of policy with your Lordship at forthcoming meeting at Halfa on 31st March; secondly, to despatch Mr. Home to Addis Ababa with detailed instructions as to agreed policy and Sudan's attitude; thirdly, to authorise Sir George Schuster, who expects to reach London early in May, to conduct further negotiations for Sudan Government. I think it will greatly facilitate matters if final discussions can be handled between London and Addis Ababa with Sudan representatives available at each end.

"4. May I be supplied with copies of the various concessions referred to in Foreign Office telegram? I suggest also that enquiry might usefully be made in London as to experience of Anglo-Persian Oil Company in allotting free shares in the company to local tribesmen.

"5. Meanwhile I suggest that Mr. Bentinck be instructed to endeavour to reach first stage mentioned in Foreign Office telegram and to get Ras Taffari to show his hand rather more as to form of agreement and nature of payments which he expects. He might be reminded that, according to his letter of 26th July, 1924, to Mr. MacDonald, he said that Abyssinian Government would make proposals about a rent and that we have awaited these proposals.

"6. In order to give Mr. Bentinck some idea of probable line of our final proposals, I make the following preliminary observations:—

"Sudan Government cannot itself utilise water for several years, and unless satisfactory agreement can be made immediately with Egypt there may be some delay in construction. I therefore think that some preliminary annual payments pending completion will be desirable, say, £10,000 per annum, to be given as guarantee of good faith and as payment for protection of local survey parties, &c.

I consider it essential that this money and part of all preliminary payments should go to local chiefs whose support is required.

"Subject to the above, I consider Mr. Bentinck's proposals for cash payments and rental reasonable, but we must fix share of profit in advance, say, one-fifth in addition to fixed rent and leave only method of calculation to independent commission. Calculation of Government's profit, especially in case of Egyptian Government, will be very difficult, and Ras Taffari should be made to realise that if he wants payment in this form amounts for many years, at least until all water utilised, will be small, while they will always be uncertain as cotton prices and profits are diminishing and large portion of water will be used for food crops which are necessary for growing population, but do not bring large cash return to the Government. Mr. Bentinck might discuss the above general considerations with Ras Taffari in preliminary conversations.

"7. Reference paragraph 13 of Mr. Bentinck's despatch. Dam near Roseires not practicable, but he might indicate that Sudan can increase Makram storage, and has already resources largely in excess of immediate needs on which to draw. Ultimately of course Tsana is essential."

[J 718/24/1]

No. 170.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 22.)(No. 95.)
(Telegraphic.)

Cairo, March 22, 1927.

FOLLOWING received from Khartum:—

"Addressed to High Commissioner, No. 27. Repeated to Addis Ababa, No. 46, for observations by telegraph by 28th March.

"Reference Mr. Bentinck's telegram No. 17 to Khartum, No. 28 to Foreign Office.

"In absence of Governor-General on tour, following from financial secretary:—

"1. I quite appreciate his difficulties. Our own position is, however, also very difficult owing to fact that we have to make offer, whereas it is Egypt which will be using most water for first fifteen years.

"2. I propose the following terms for consideration:—

"(a.) £10,000 on signature of agreement.

"(b.) Annual retaining fee of £10,000 during the period of preparation.

"(c.) £100,000 on completion of dam.

"(d.) Rental of £25,000, to be increased gradually according to the amount of water used up to final maximum of £75,000 annually, when full storage of water is being used.

"As regards the above figures, (a) might possibly be increased to £30,000 if Mr. Bentinck thinks essential.

"A part at least of (a) and (b) and (c) ought to be used for personal payments to Taffari and local chiefs.

"(d) represents maximum, and, to start with, no more than £50,000 should be mentioned.

"3. As regards the suggestion of giving a share of the profits, calculation of profits will be almost impossible as long as Egypt is using the bulk of the water, but in the case of water used for Gezireh it would be easier. Our use of Lake Tsana water for Gezireh is, however, not likely to commence for ten years, and then only on a small scale, gradually increasing.

"Taffari's point might possibly be met by the following proposal:—

"Rental to be fixed as under (d), but after fifteen years from completion, and thereafter at five-year intervals, the situation to be reviewed, and if the rental on this basis is less than one-fifth of direct Government profits, based on the previous five years' average, then the rental will be increased accordingly.

"An independent commission to be appointed by the League of Nations if His Majesty's Government and Abyssinian Government cannot agree to the figures. It would have to be clearly understood that profits would be net profits after payment of expenses and calculated only on the extra area irrigated by Lake Tsana water, and that the Government would have free discretion to alter

the rates to cultivators. Taffari must understand that we want the water for the benefit of the people and not for the sake of making profits.

"4. Mr. Bentinck should realise that unless Egypt comes in there must be considerable delay in building the dam and reaching the stage of full utilisation of the water.

"5. Another possible alternative would be the formation of an Anglo-Abyssinian company to work the concession.

"The company to pay the Abyssinian Government for the concession the sums stated under paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) and a fixed rental of £25,000.

"The necessary cash to be subscribed by nominees of the British Government.

"The shares to be issued as follows:—

"55 per cent. for cash, 45 per cent. as founders' shares to the Abyssinian Government.

"The income to be applied as follows:—

"First, the payment of working expenses and rental. Secondly, 5 per cent. interest on shares issued for cash. Thirdly, the surplus to be divided equally, share for share.

"The company's income to take the form of a rate for water drawn from the lake, the rate being fixed so that the income is, say, the maximum of £170,000 when the full quantity of storage is being used.

"This rate could be subject to adjustment on the lines proposed in paragraph 3 on the understanding that it is intended to represent two-fifths of direct net profits from use of the water.

"It will be appreciated that the rental payable to the company, if formed on the lines proposed above, can be fixed considerably higher than in the case of direct rental to the Abyssinian Government, because one-half of the profits goes to those who find the money for the dam, while the interest and expenses are deducted first.

"For example, if the cost of the dam £1,500,000, working expenses £10,000, rental £25,000, total deductions would be £110,000. If the income of the company is £170,000, net profit divisible amongst the shareholders would be £60,000. Of this, the Abyssinian Government would receive 45 per cent., so that their total income, combined with the fixed rental of £25,000, would be £52,000.

"6. I suggest that, if the observations of the Foreign Office and Mr. Bentinck could be obtained on the above before 31st March, final proposals could be telegraphed to Mr. Bentinck after discussion with you at Hal . . ."

[J 724/24/1]

No. 171.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 23.)

(No. 30.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, March 21, 1927.

FOLLOWING for Mr. Murray:—

"(Private).

"Khartum telegram to Cairo, No. 21.

"I am ill in bed, but hope to be able in a few days to telegraph observations additional to those contained in my telegram No. 28 to Foreign Office."

[J 493/24/1]

No. 172.

Foreign Office to Dominions Office.

(Confidential.)

Foreign Office, March 26, 1927.

Sir,

WITH reference to your letter of the 14th January regarding the negotiations with the Abyssinian Government for the Lake Tsana concession, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to request you to lay before Mr. Secretary Amery the accompanying copy of a despatch on this subject from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.*

* No. 164.

2. As Mr. Bentinck's tentative suggestions as to the procedure to be followed in the conduct of the negotiations seemed open to amendment, a telegram, of which a copy is enclosed herein*, has been despatched to Cairo putting forward alternative suggestions and inviting the views of His Majesty's High Commissioner for Egypt and the Sudan and of the Governor-General of the latter country.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 680/24/1]

No. 173.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 35.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, March 26, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 28: Lake Tsana.

In the light of Khartum telegrams Nos. 21 and 27 to Cairo, I hope that you will be able to agree to the general lines of the procedure which I suggested in my telegram to Cairo No. 63, and which as far as I can judge seems to fit in very well with what Ras Taffari asked for and will enable you to go ahead without loss of time.

Your memorandum as amended by my telegram No. 63 to Cairo and the Khartum telegrams mentioned above can be given to Ras Taffari by you unofficially in the first instance, and the material supplied by Khartum will enable you to discuss the concession agreement fully with him and ascertain which form (*cf.* Khartum telegram No. 27) is most likely to commend itself to him and the advisers of the Empress.

Our preference would be for a concession to an individual, say, Sir G. Schuster (*cf.* Ilg Concession of 1894, and recent Montague Concession described in your despatch No. 63 of 21st February), who would be empowered to form company on basis of paragraph 5 of Khartum telegram No. 27 for purposes generally described in your memorandum and more specifically in your draft treaty which the concession would replace. As regards other points raised in your telegram under reply, my objection to words "to construct" is merely that they are not literally true, for it will not be His Majesty's Government but a contractor who will do the work.

I see no objection to leaving visit of engineers to lake to be dealt with in concession agreement if you are satisfied that there will be no hitch.

If Ras Taffari dislikes railway concession the Montague Concession provides alternative model.

I welcome suggestion in paragraph 3 of Khartum telegram No. 21 to Cairo regarding Sir G. Schuster and Mr. Home, and I trust that you will realise that both their proposals and mine are intended to help you and promote success of your negotiations.

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 85, for Khartum.)

[J 767/24/1]

No. 174.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 28.)

(No. 32.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, March 26, 1927.

KHARTUM telegram No. 21 to Cairo.

1. I adhere most strongly to paragraphs 1, 5, 6 and 7 of my telegram No. 28, repeated to Khartum No. 17, but I would give way over paragraph 3 if you feel strongly about it. I cannot, therefore, agree to paragraph 2 of Khartum telegram.

2. Sudan telegram No. 5. I do not think Ras Taffari has ever had a hand to show. If I can once make him fair and square offer for which he is waiting, he may make a counter-proposal, but we surely do not want to make one on the lines of his letter to Mr. MacDonald of 26th July, 1924 (see page 4 of my despatch No. 45). I feel we must resist the idea which has been put into his mind of an international syndicate building the dam and renting surplus waters to us (see my despatch No. 70 of 1st March) and that use of words "surplus and rent" must be avoided by us. Unless we can make Ras Taffari a substantial offer I fear he will make us an offer

* No. 166.

[16460]

of this nature. It is essential for Ras Taffari and Ras Kassa to be able to prove to the Empress and the Conservatives that my offer will be for the good of Abyssinia.

3. Sudan telegram, paragraph 6. I can only pay money to Central Government and I cannot suggest to Ras Taffari how money should be distributed.

4. Sudan telegram to Cairo No. 27, paragraph 2. I much prefer lump payment to annual retaining fee.

I fear if Abyssinians are sure of large retaining fee they may not be in any great hurry for next step and might put obstruction in our way when we are ready to construct dam. I think suggestion under (d) would be most helpful if I were authorised to offer it.

5. Paragraph 3 would, I think, meet Heir Apparent's wishes. I can satisfy him that if British Government or the Sudan Government are going to make fabulous profits, Abyssinia shall also benefit.

6. Paragraph 4. I do not understand meaning of words "unless Egypt comes in." What arrangements His Majesty's Government may choose to make with Egypt are surely not my concern nor concern of Abyssinian Government. We must not forget that as Egypt has no treaty it has no standing in this matter *vis-à-vis* the Abyssinian Government (see my despatch No. 222 of 24th November).

7. Paragraph 5 of part 2. I think this alternative would also meet case if you prefer formation of Anglo-Abyssinian company. I could if you wished discuss both alternatives unofficially with Heir Apparent.

(Repeated to Khartum, No. 20, for repetition to Cairo.)

[J 774/24/1]

No. 175.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received March 30.)

(No. 34.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, March 29, 1927.

KHARTUM telegram No. 22 and your telegram No. 35.

My telegrams Nos. 28 and 32 contain my carefully considered views. They were compiled in consultation with my staff. Every word has been considered and weighed. I beg you to look at matter from point of view of Abyssinia, where negotiations will be carried on. It is I who have to conduct negotiations with Ras Taffari and Ras Kassa and to meet peculiar mentality of the Abyssinians.

I am sorry to disagree, but I am absolutely opposed to asking for a concession to an individual. Only possible exception would be the King himself. Our treaty of 1902, upon which our whole case is based, speaks of His Majesty's Government and all negotiations have been and must continue to be carried out by His Majesty's Government. If we can once [group omitted] concession by treaty surely His Majesty's Government could then form company to construct dam with approval of and under supervision of His Majesty's Government. We must reckon with extreme suspicion of Abyssinians, which I fear would be increased if we were now to ask for concession for an individual.

I infinitely prefer simple and short treaty to complicated and lengthy agreement like concession granted to Mr. Montague. Subsequent treatment of Mr. Montague's representatives here does not encourage me to take his concession as a model (see my despatch No. 80). Ras Taffari has already seen Russell draft treaty. It is short and to the point; my only criticism of it is that it is too much asking and not enough giving on our part. Paragraph 10 of my despatch No. 45.

I have asked Khartum to send Mr. Home, but I respectfully submit that a sympathetic consideration of suggestions made and objections raised in my telegrams will afford me more help in my very difficult task than anything else.

(Repeated to Khartum.)

[J 740/24/1]

No. 176.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 37.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, March 29, 1927.

YOUR despatch No. 45 of the 5th February: Lake Tsana negotiations.

You are authorised to inform Ras Taffari, when you consider the announcement best calculated to produce the maximum effect, that one of the younger Royal Princes

will visit Addis Ababa at the head of a special Foreign Office mission to convey the King's congratulations to Ras Taffari and the Empress as soon as a satisfactory agreement has been reached in regard to Lake Tsana, *i.e.*, when the concession agreement referred to in my telegram No. 26 of the 9th March as the second stage in the negotiations has been formally granted by the Abyssinian Government.

[J 774/24/1]

No. 177.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 38.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, March 31, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 34 of the 29th March: Lake Tsana.

Our suggestions were not intended to supersede yours unless they should prove more acceptable to Ras Taffari. But this will not be apparent until you ask him and explain the points in favour of each alternative procedure, leaving it to him to choose which we are to follow.

Our suggestion for procedure, which does not really differ in essentials from yours, may be summarised as follows:—

- (1.) Submit memorandum as amended less treaty unofficially to Ras Taffari.
- (2.) Explain to him that if he approves its terms it will be sent to him officially for approval of Empress in a note, to which we should expect him to reply on the lines of Menelik's letter to Ilg. Whether to make specific reference to this document or not is a matter for your discretion.
- (3.) Simultaneously with (1) or subsequently at your discretion, give him written list of points to be covered by the contract and ask him if he prefers this to take form of concession to Anglo-Abyssinian company or treaty with His Majesty's Government, who would then have to form company to work concession. You could explain arguments in favour of both procedures and offer to give him draft of concession or treaty, according to which he thought would be most easily comprehensible by, and recommendable to, Empress and council. You would add that the only reason why you have not from the first annexed draft to memorandum, as requested by him, is that it would be a waste of time to prepare it until you knew which form it was to take.

List of points would be as in your treaty less article 10:—

- (a.) Permission to construct and maintain dam and works and erect buildings.
- (b.) Permission to construct and maintain motor road and telegraph line.
- (c.) Permit of entry and guarantee of protection for engineers, &c., whose numbers will be kept down to minimum.
- (d.) Permit of entry for necessary machinery and material not locally obtainable.
- (e.) Facilities for local purchase of material and recruitment of local labour.
- (f.) Boats and steamers on lake.
- (g.) Guarantee for riparian cultivators on river below dam.
- (h.) Level of lake guarantee.
- (i.) Financial inducements to Abyssinian Government on the lines suggested by Khartum, subject to reasonable counter-suggestions by Ras Taffari.

Subject, therefore, to concurrence of Khartum, there is no objection as far as we are concerned to your laying before Ras Taffari both your suggestions and ours as summarised above; if you like you might show him your draft treaty less article 10, and ask which he prefers.

As regards specific points mentioned in your telegram No. 32, I am ready to leave question of preliminary visit of engineers to your discretion. Paragraph 3, I agree. Paragraph 6, I agree. Your telegram No. 34, suggestion for concession to an individual, was put forward as one that might conceivably be acceptable to Abyssinians. I have no wish to press it. Answers to other points depend really on progress and course of negotiations. Your suggestions and objections have always had and will continue to have sympathetic consideration.

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 89, for Lord Lloyd.)

[J 789/24/1]

No. 178.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 1.)(No. 38.)
(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, March 31, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 37.

I am greatly pleased. I assume that one of the King's sons is meant? This is important.

[J 789/24/1]

No. 179.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).(No. 41.)
(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, April 2, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 38 of 31st March: Royal return visit to Abyssinia.

Yes.

[J 826/24/1]

No. 180.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 3.)(No. 2.)
(Telegraphic.)

Assuan, April 3, 1927.

MY telegram No. 93.

After discussion with Governor-General of Sudan, I have arrived at following conclusions:—

1. No real progress can be made until we can put forward concrete proposal for treaty with definite financial proposals. I consider it best to leave Mr. Bentinck to decide occasion for presentation.

2. While I have no serious objection to formation of company to build dam, I think it better that we should ask in the first instance for direct concession to His Majesty's Government, leaving it to Taffari to suggest company basis if he prefers it.

3. With reference to paragraph 3 of Mr. Bentinck's telegram No. 32 to Foreign Office of 26th March, if, as seems inevitable, some payments are found necessary in order to secure the support of local chiefs, *e.g.*, Ras Hailu, I consider that they should take the form of payments for guaranteeing freedom from disturbance to our engineers and working parties. No money should pass until concession is actually granted.

4. As regards financial terms, my proposals are as follows:—

(a.) Annual payment of £10,000 rental from signature of concession agreement until completion of the dam. If desirable as a concession during negotiations, it could be agreed to pay on signature three years' instalments in advance so as to produce £30,000 initial payment proposed by Mr. Bentinck.

(b.) £100,000 on completion of the dam.

(c.) Rental of £20,000 per annum first five years after completion; £30,000 second five years; £40,000 third five years.

At the end of this period situation could be reviewed in order to estimate actual net profits made by Sudan Government from use of water stored in Lake Tsana, it being agreed that rental should then be adjusted to represent one-fifth of such profits. In order to calculate profits for this purpose, average of the five years preceding date of review will be taken. A similar review to be made every ten years thereafter.

It would be advisable for Mr. Bentinck to explain that many years must elapse before Sudan can profitably use all the water, and it is for this reason that first review is postponed for 15 years.

In my immediately following telegram I propose remaining terms for treaty.

In my present proposals I have endeavoured to follow as closely as possible Mr. Bentinck's recommendations, in whose discretion we have every confidence. If you approve, I presume you will authorise him to proceed without further delay.

(Repeated to Addis Ababa.)

[J 823/24/1]

No. 181.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 3.)(No. 3.)
(Telegraphic.)

Assuan, April 3, 1927.

MY immediately preceding telegram.

Following is proposed draft:—

1. Her Majesty Zauditu, Queen of Queens of Ethiopia, hereby authorises His Britannic Majesty's Government to construct and maintain a dam across the waters of the Blue Nile at the outlet from Lake Tsana for the purpose of regulating the flow of water from the lake, and to deepen the channel where necessary near the dam.

2. Her Majesty will permit entry into Abyssinia of personnel and labour, both skilled and unskilled, who may be necessary for construction; and will guarantee the safety of all those employed on the works and ensure that they are unhindered in the execution of their duties; and will further guarantee safety of works themselves. His Majesty's Government will give preference to local labour as far as possible.

3. After completion of works His Majesty's Government will see that permanent staff is limited to smallest number of engineers and assistants compatible with proper operation and care of works.

4. Her Majesty will permit erection of buildings necessary for aforesaid engineers and labourers, and for store-houses, offices, wharves, &c., in connection with the dam.

5. Her Majesty will facilitate His Majesty's Government in obtaining materials such as stone, timber, &c., in the neighbourhood of the lake for all works in connection with the dam, and will facilitate the employment of local labour.

6. Her Majesty will permit His Majesty's Government to place small steamers and boats on the lake and to make such other arrangements as may be necessary for transport of the materials required in connection with the dam.

7. Her Majesty will permit the construction and maintenance of a road between Gallabat and Delgi for the purpose of transporting the materials necessary for the works and importation of such materials free of duty; it is expressly understood that no materials of war shall be introduced without the specific permission of the Imperial Ethiopian Government. This road will be open for general use.

8. Her Majesty will permit the erection and maintenance at His Britannic Majesty's Government's expense of a telegraph line from Gallabat through Delgi to the dam. The Imperial Ethiopian Government shall have the right to send messages over this line free of charge, should they at any time wish to do so.

9. The riparian rights of the inhabitants dwelling on both sides of the Blue Nile throughout its length in Ethiopian territory to use these waters for domestic purposes as well as for the cultivation of food crops necessary to their own subsistence will not be questioned, but it is understood that no attempt will be made to arrest, divert, or obstruct in any way the flow of the Blue Nile or its tributaries in a manner contrary to article 3 of the treaty with the Emperor Menelik of 15th May, 1902.

10. His Majesty's Government bind themselves so to construct and control the dam that the water of the lake shall never rise higher than the highest level hitherto recorded in rainy season. His Majesty's Government will consequently be able to give a full guarantee that churches on islands in and on banks of lake shall not suffer damage through inundation.

11. In consideration for permission and facilities granted by Her Majesty in terms of this treaty His Britannic Majesty's Government will make payment to Imperial Ethiopian Government as follows (here insert terms finally agreed on).

Following points in above draft call for comment:—

Paragraph 1. I prefer "construct" rather than "arrange to construct." It is simpler and from a practical point of view not inaccurate.

Paragraph 3 and elsewhere. "Works" has been substituted for "dam" in Bentinck's draft.

Paragraph 5. Words "by purchase" have been omitted as they would not cover, for example, quarrying of stone.

Paragraph 6. Reference to other arrangements for transport is intended to cover possible use of aircraft for transport of materials from Sudan.
Paragraph 8. The latter part of Bentinck's paragraph might lead to a claim to control line as well as to use it.

(Repeated to Addis Ababa.)

[J 833/24/1]

No. 182.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 5.)

(No. 41A.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, April 4, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 38.

I think we are now practically all agreed. Alternative suggestions in Khartum telegram No. 27 to Cairo, which I am [group undecypherable] discuss unofficially with Ras Tafari and subsequently submit to him officially if he should so desire, meet my suggestions in article 12 of my draft treaty, excepting over the question of an annual retaining fee. After reading my objections to this paragraph 4 of my telegram No. 32 I hope that question may be left to my discretion.

2. I take it that if Ras Tafari, on receipt of memorandum, should ask for full draft treaty I may give it to him in writing as amended in your telegram No. 63 to Cairo, and in paragraph 1 of Khartum telegram No. 27 to Cairo, together with one or other of the two alternative financial schemes proposed in Khartum telegram No. 27 to Cairo.

3. In your telegram No. 8 you have summarised draft treaty enclosed in my despatch No. 45. I take it that with omission of article 10, insertion in memorandum of article 11, and necessary modifications of article 12 and other articles suggested by you, my treaty stands? But your summary omits my article 9, retention of which is essential from Abyssinian point of view. I assume that omission was not intentional and that you agree to article 9.

4. You speak of "motor road." My article 6 merely mentioned "road." If you wish motor road to be specified I can discuss it with Ras Tafari. Your order of articles in your telegram No. 38 is not exactly the same as mine. Is order in my draft approved?

(Repeated to Khartum for Cairo, No. 25.)

[J 833/24/1]

No. 183.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 46.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, April 6, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 41A of 4th April: Lake Tsana, was despatched before you had received Lord Lloyd's telegrams Nos. 2 and 3 from Assuan as to which I am telegraphing separately and therefore refrain from replying in this telegram to your paragraphs 1 and 2.

Your article 9 appeared in my point (h).

I added "motor" having in mind your telegram No. 7 of 29th January, 1926, where you urged its substitution for "corridor" in Anglo-Italian notes.

My order was suggested as possibly more logical in sequence, but I leave you entire discretion to adopt it, your own or that in Lord Lloyd's telegram.

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 96.)

[J 856/24/1]

No. 184.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 7.)

(No. 69.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, March 1, 1927.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 22 of to-day's date, I have the honour to transmit herewith extracts from a letter which I have received from Major Cheesman from Dejen on the Abbai, a little to the north of the 10th parallel.

2. I have the honour to draw attention to Major Cheesman's statement that he is reaching the conclusion that "most of the water that leaves Tsana is evaporated before it reaches the Sudan," in the dry season, of course. Also that Mr. C. F. Rey's scheme of descending the Abbai by boat is impossible.

3. As Mr. Rey is still at Addis Ababa, I am showing him the enclosed extracts from Major Cheesman's letter.

I am forwarding a copy of this despatch with its enclosure to Khartum.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 184

Major Cheesman to Mr. Bentinck

(Extract.)

Dear Mr. Bentinck,

Camp Dejen, February 23, 1927.

WE have had no good luck so far. Abyssinia has favoured me with ill-luck, dealt out with both hands, but we have managed in spite of it to fill a fat note-book with information on the Abbai between here and Tsana—I think the most difficult half of the journey, and certainly the least known. The chief misfortune was an epidemic of influenza among the men. It was running through the country-side and hit us hard, no one escaped; several were very bad, and, I am sorry to say, two died. Tsahai Effendi and I had a severe attack, but, having more resistance and laying up in time, managed to make pretty good recoveries. The chief effect was that all the men got their "tails down" early in the journey and wanted to return to Dangila; it was, of course, all put down to the Abbai. The men all said: "We knew if we went down the Abbai we should die, and now we have only been on the Abbai three weeks and two men have died. What more proof is wanted; where shall we all be in a month's time?" The moral of this is do not engage men who have been born at 5,000 feet and over for work on the Abbai; they are frightened all the time, and soon get completely unnerved. Whereas there are thousands of villages down the Abbai Valley slopes, almost to the river level, inhabited by Abyssinians of the same flesh and blood. But being born down there they are probably immune, and, at any rate, are not frightened of the diseases, either real or imaginary, of the lower levels.

I had by then decided that I could not get any further down the Abbai banks with my mules and should have to buy donkeys on account of the precipices, but as this seemed unnecessary for a reconnaissance and would have occupied five years I decided to keep the men and mules on the edge of the valley, and when it seemed necessary to make a descent to the river bank I hired three local men, stayed the night there and returned to camp next day. By this means I have obtained a pretty good idea of the whole river and valley and tributaries on both banks. For a general impression, the smallness and insignificance of the river first strikes one. I have not yet seen it in Dejen, but about 12 miles above the current volume seems no bigger than when it left Tsana, in spite of the many tributaries that have joined it. It is, in fact, best described as a mountain torrent or "brook," and the tributaries which join it, with most imposing valleys of their own, sides often 3,000 feet high, are mere trickling streams. I am coming to the conclusion that most of the water that leaves Tsana is evaporated before it reaches the Sudan; of course, during the rains there is considerable alteration, and the smallest valleys and branches now bone dry are roaring rivers.

As to Rey's proposal of going by boat from Tsana downwards, a boat is quite impossible. The Abbai, as far as I have gone, has cascades, shallows and cataracts every half mile; and every mile or so the river washes a precipice, first on one bank and then on the other, so there is no possibility of carrying the boat along the shore. Each reach of the river for the last 100 miles or so is so alike that one could not tell which is which.

If a journey along the banks were contemplated, one could get nearest by having two distinct caravans. The mules, with heavy stuff, would follow the big valley top from 6 to 10 miles from the river. The other, composed of lightly loaded donkeys, with skin packages and only essential kit, although they could not follow the Abbai banks, would probably be able to keep within 2 or 3 miles on the occasions when

they had to circumvent the frequent unpassable obstacles. This donkey caravan would make very slow progress, and I should say the whole journey would take from three to five years. The roads they would use would be cow paths and village-to-village tracks; the day's march is seldom more than village to village, perhaps 5 miles of road and 1 mile of Abbai, because no villager is able to guide you further than to the next village and there is delay in finding the next guide. Most villages have fair tracks leading to the valley top, i.e., at right angles to the river's course, and the donkey caravan after, say, a week would come up to refit, and meet the mule caravan by prearranged tryst. This would have been impossible this year, because the maps are so unreliable; but I hope when I sort out my information that it will be sufficiently accurate to alter this. There is not water everywhere, and one has to be careful on that account. Information of precipices and what lies ahead is difficult to obtain, and I have had frequently to ride ahead the day before and find it out for myself before letting the mules come along, which is tiring and wastes time. The most interesting fact that comes out of this part of the journey is that the Abbai and its tributaries fall headlong into one of the finest examples of a rift valley that, I should say, exists in Africa. Never having seen one perhaps this is unfair to other rift valleys, but as far as I have been able to ascertain no one has noticed this. Some of the sides are as much as 3,000 feet, and as it is only 6 to 8 miles from cliff top to cliff top, the gradient is fairly steep and the scenery magnificent; much of its grandeur is lost, however, when you have to get mules up and down the 3,000 feet. Many of the outrunners are as big or nearly equal to the Abbai or main valley, and run from 8 to 10 miles inland at right angles to it; thus one cannot keep to the crest of the Abbai Valley even, because you are forced away from it to round the head of these huge outrunners. The outrunners do not begin gradually to slope downwards, but the head is invariably a 1,000-foot precipice, over which the tributaries which come meandering along from the high plateau suddenly hurl themselves.

The rivers have had nothing to do with the formation of these valleys, their mark on their course is negligible; but the Abbai has, I think, cut out a ravine for itself in places with cliffs 300 feet deep, so it is in a ravine within a valley. For this reason, when you are on the river bank you can see nothing but the sky, and not much of that, and the river for half a mile up-stream and half a mile down-stream where a cliff and curve in the course invariably shuts off the view, so that a journey down the banks, if possible, would be little use from a geographical point of view.

Yours sincerely,
R. E. CHEESMAN.

[J 857/24/1]

No. 185.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 7.)

(No. 70.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, March 1, 1927.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 45 of the 5th ultimo, I have the honour to quote the following passage from a letter just received from Major Cheesman. Ras Hailu "said that the Abyssinian Government had asked him to undertake the agency for the construction of Lake Tsana dam, the suggestion then being that the water should be sold to the Sudan Government. Ras Hailu had replied that he did not agree with the idea, as it was, in his opinion, better to let the Sudan Government do the work themselves as no one could tell as well as they what was required." The above is significant when read in conjunction with Ras Taffari's language to me as recorded in paragraph 4 of my despatch under reference.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch to Cairo and Khartum.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 826/24/1]

No. 186.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 48.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, April 11, 1927.

LORD LLOYD'S telegrams Nos. 2 and 3 from Assuan of 3rd April: Lake Tsana.

You may proceed as proposed.

I will send by bag draft of preamble and final clause in appropriate technical terms, but embodying opening paragraph of your suggestions for treaty. You may care to draw Ras Taffari's attention to need for this addition before treaty is finally engrossed.

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 99.)

[J 917/24/1]

No. 187.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 12.)

(No. 45.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, April 9, 1927.

LORD LLOYD'S telegrams Nos. 2 and 3 from Assuan.

I am delighted to see that we are now so nearly agreed; there are, however, a few points to be cleared up.

1. Is there any reason for changing "engineers" into "personnel" in article 2 of my original suggestions for treaty and leaving word "engineers" in my article 3? I prefer word "engineers."

2. Owing to peculiar Abyssinian mentality, I much prefer in first instance to hand Ras Taffari "suggestions for treaty" beginning "His Majesty's Government will ask Imperial Government," as in my draft, instead of giving him straight off "A," as suggested in Assuan telegram No. 3. From our point of view this may seem small matter, but I think my suggestion preferable from Abyssinian point of view.

3. I attach great importance to retention of preamble in my "suggestions for treaty."

4. Lord Lloyd's article 2 omits my words "and maintenance of dam" after "construction"; is not it desirable to retain these words?

5. Lord Lloyd's article 5. Would not it be well to add following sentence: "Should materials required be found in land belonging to local inhabitants, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to purchase these materials at a fair price"?

6. Lord Lloyd's article 6. I feel that addition of "such other arrangements," &c., would be calculated to create suspicion, which would be increased if possible use of aircraft were suggested. Would not it be better to ask for this later, if and when aircraft are allowed in Abyssinia.

7. My article 6. I prefer retention of sentence about "explosives," in view of restrictions on import of war material.

8. For reasons explained at the end of paragraph 3 of my telegram No. 34, I prefer retention in the first part of my article 12 of sentence "and in addition guarantees and assurances," &c. I want Abyssinians to see it is not all asking on our part.

9. From Abyssinian point of view, I feel that it will be very important to strike whilst the iron is hot, and construction of dam as soon as possible after signature of treaty, whether Sudan requires water at that moment or not. I fear that suggestion made in paragraph 4 (a) of Assuan telegram No. 2 may give the impression here that we are not really in a hurry and afford Abyssinians a much desired excuse for delay. Besides, if Ras Taffari obtains concession for us, we must construct dam whilst he and others supporting him are still in power.

10. Other suggestions in Lord Lloyd's telegrams should prove most helpful, and all his terms proposed in his telegram No. 2 should, I think, by their simplicity appeal to the Abyssinians. I must, however, warn you again that Abyssinians will open their mouths wide, and that financial terms will probably be subject of a good deal of bargaining.

(Repeated to Khartum, No. 26, for Cairo.)

[J 930/24/1]

No. 188.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 14.)

(No. 49.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, April 13, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 48 has evidently crossed my telegram No. 45. I propose to await your and Lord Lloyd's answer to points raised in my telegram before proceeding.

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 6.)

[J 917/24/1]

No. 189.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd (Cairo).

(No. 104.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, April 16, 1927.

ADDIS ABABA telegram to Foreign Office No. 45 of 9th April: Lake Tsana.

Subject to any observations you or Sudan Government desire to make, I approve Mr. Bentinck's suggestions generally, though I think that, if payment for local material is to be mentioned in treaty at all, and I doubt expediency of this, article 5 ought to start "Her Majesty will facilitate the acquisition at a fair price by His Majesty's Government of materials," &c. This, while binding His Majesty's Government to pay for what they want, commits Abyssinia on the point of fairness. I entirely agree with Mr. Bentinck that as soon as concession is granted, preliminary work would be started, financial difficulties notwithstanding.

(Repeated to Addis Ababa, No. 51.)

[J 936/24/1]

No. 190.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 18.)

(No. 125.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Cairo, April 18, 1927.

ADDRESSED to Khartum, No. 42.

Your telegram No. 42.

References are to Mr. Bentinck's telegram No. 45 to Foreign Office.

(1.) To meet Mr. Bentinck's query I suggest following wording:—

"Her Majesty will permit entry into Abyssinia of such personnel of engineers and labourers, skilled and unskilled," &c.

This can be held to cover all necessary staff, technical and others.

(2.) While fully appreciating Mr. Bentinck's argument based upon Abyssinian mentality, I should much prefer that draft treaty should be given direct, as other course appears likely to result in unprofitable delay.

(3.) No objection.

(4.) No objection to retaining words "maintenance of dam."

(5.) Section 5 draft treaty provides that Abyssinian Government will "facilitate His Majesty's Government in obtaining material."

I do not like proposed addition, which might afford Abyssinians opportunity for imposing prohibitive prices with a view to obstructing work or even of rendering it impossible of execution. This would, of course, not debar us from paying reasonable prices if necessary.

6. I think these words should be allowed to stand. If Abyssinians offer serious objections I should like to have opportunity of considering their arguments.

(7 and 8.) No objection.

(9.) I do not consider manner of proposed payments can be interpreted by the Abyssinians as evidence that we do not wish to push on with work. I think we must ask Mr. Bentinck to correct any such impression if it appears during negotiations.

[J 936/24/1]

No. 191.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd (Cairo).

(No. 109.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, April 21, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 125 of the 18th April: Lake Tsana, which you might repeat to Addis Ababa with this if you agree, appears to have crossed my telegram No. 104, which meets your objections to point 5. I am disposed to leave to Mr. Bentinck's discretion points 1, 6 and 9. As regards point 2, your draft treaty will in any case have to be altered before signature to conform with established phraseology, and I think it may be safer in the long run if Mr. Bentinck in the first place presents his "suggestions" as modified by subsequent correspondence.

[J 1051/24/1]

No. 192.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 26.)

(No. 56.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, April 23, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 51.

In paragraph 1 you miss my point in paragraph 5 of my telegram No. 45, which was that we should not purchase all materials, but only those found "in lands belonging to local inhabitants"—that is to say, that we should not have to pay for materials found in Crown lands. I suggest, therefore, leaving article 5 as it stands in Lord Lloyd's telegram from Assuan No. 3. I can always give an assurance about payment to private landowners separately.

I note you approve of the rest of my suggestions, but I have been waiting to hear what Lord Lloyd has to say. I note that in Khartum telegram No. 42 to Cairo Governor-General does not agree with paragraphs 6 and 9 of my telegram No. 45. I feel very strongly upon these points and especially point 9, and I hope Khartum will be able to agree with my view. If we can agree I can present memorandum, which I am most anxious to do before 3rd May.

(Repeated to Khartum for Cairo, No. 30.)

[J 1054/24/1]

No. 193.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 26.)

(No. 57.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, April 25, 1927.

CAIRO telegram No. 42 to Khartum reached me after I had sent my telegram No. 56 to Foreign Office.

In view of urgency of handing in memorandum for which Ras Tafari keeps asking, I am not prepared to waive my opposition to point 4 (a) of Assuan telegram No. 2 about retaining fees, whilst I adhere to necessity for early construction explained in paragraph 9 of my telegram No. 45. But see last sentence of that telegram. I will also agree to points 1, 2 and 5 of Cairo telegram No. 42. Thus, we are now agreed upon all points excepting point 6 of my telegram No. 45, and upon this I feel too strongly to give way without direct orders from Foreign Office. I have given this point further careful consideration in consultation with my staff, including Home, and we all feel it would be a mistake, which might prove fatal, to insert additional sentence suggested in paragraph 6 of Assuan telegram No. 3. I beg that Cairo and Khartum do not press this point. I see no reason to anticipate difficulty in future once aircraft are allowed in Abyssinia, which it seems possible may be fairly soon. If we can agree upon this point I should be glad of early answer so as to hand in memorandum and draft treaty this week if possible.

Mr. Home suggests, and I agree, that in paragraph 6 of draft treaty enclosed in my despatch No. 45, words "free of duty" be replaced by words "free of custom duties and local tolls."

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 9, and Khartum, No. 32.)

[J 1058/24/1]

No. 194.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 143.)

Foreign Office, April 28, 1927.

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 48 of the 11th instant, I transmit to you herewith a draft of the treaty relating to the Lake Tsana Concession, which it is proposed might be handed to Ras Tafari.

2. This draft follows almost word for word that suggested by His Majesty's High Commissioner for Egypt and the Sudan. To it have been added a preamble on the lines suggested by you, a final clause in the usual treaty form, and a clause providing for the reference of disputes to the Permanent Court of International Justice; this last is customary in treaties of this sort, and is intended as a substitute for your original article 10, to which I explained my objections in my telegram No. 26 of the 9th March. I have no desire to insist on its inclusion if, for particular reasons, you wish to omit it, but you will notice from my despatch No. 116 of the 13th instant that the point has already been made the subject of a question in Parliament. In addition to this, you will notice that the wording of article 5 has been modified in an attempt to meet the point about payment for materials purchased locally, raised in your telegram No. 45 of the 9th instant. Lord Lloyd's words "and such other arrangements . . ." have been purposely omitted from article 6, but, if you find later that the Abyssinian Government raise no objection to their inclusion, you should arrange for their addition.

3. You will yourself appreciate, and you should explain to Ras Tafari, that the enclosed draft is not intended as definitive but as a pattern in the usual treaty form drawn up to obviate the need for long telegrams during your negotiations giving whole clauses *in extenso*.

4. The new title of the King should not be used unless you are aware that the necessary proclamation announcing it has been issued.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

Enclosure in No. 194.

Suggested Treaty.

HIS Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and Her Majesty the Queen of Queens of Ethiopia.

Desiring to strengthen and render more effective and profitable the ancient friendship which has existed between their respective kingdoms, and to give fuller effect to article 3 of the treaty signed at Addis Ababa on the 15th May, 1902, between the representative of His Britannic Majesty and His Majesty the Emperor Menelik II, King of Kings of Ethiopia, whereby His Majesty the King of Kings of Ethiopia, engaged himself towards the Government of His Britannic Majesty not to construct, or allow to be constructed, any work across the Blue Nile, Lake Tsana, or the Sobat which would arrest the flow of their waters into the Nile, except in agreement with His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of the Sudan,

Have resolved to conclude a treaty for this purpose, and have appointed as their plenipotentiaries:

His Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India:

For Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

Charles Henry Bentinck, Esquire, Companion of His Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, His Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Her Majesty the Queen of Queens of Ethiopia,

Her Majesty the Queen of Queens of Ethiopia:

[Name of Ethiopian plenipotentiary]

who having communicated their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed upon and concluded the following articles, which shall be binding on their respective Majesties, their heirs and successors:—

ARTICLE 1.

Her Majesty the Queen of Queens of Ethiopia hereby authorises His Britannic Majesty's Government to construct and maintain a dam across the waters of the Blue Nile at the outlet from Lake Tsana for the purpose of regulating the flow of water from the lake, and to deepen the channel where necessary near the dam.

ARTICLE 2.

Her Majesty the Queen of Queens of Ethiopia will permit the entry into Ethiopia of engineers and labour, both skilled and unskilled, who may be necessary for the construction and maintenance of the dam; and will guarantee the safety of all those employed on the works and ensure that they are unhindered in the execution of their duties; and will further guarantee the safety of the works themselves. His Britannic Majesty's Government will give preference to local labour as far as possible.

ARTICLE 3.

After completion of the works His Britannic Majesty's Government will see that the permanent staff is limited to the smallest number of engineers and assistants compatible with the proper operation and care of the works.

ARTICLE 4.

Her Majesty the Queen of Queens of Ethiopia will permit the erection of buildings necessary for the aforesaid engineers and labourers and for store-houses, offices, wharves, &c., in connection with the dam.

ARTICLE 5.

Her Majesty the Queen of Queens of Ethiopia will facilitate the employment of local labour and the acquisition at a fair price by His Britannic Majesty's Government of materials such as stone, timber, &c., in the neighbourhood of the lake for all works in connection with the dam.

ARTICLE 6.

Her Majesty the Queen of Queens of Ethiopia will permit His Britannic Majesty's Government to place small steamers and boats on the lake for the transport of the materials required in connection with the dam.

ARTICLE 7.

Her Majesty the Queen of Queens of Ethiopia will permit the construction and maintenance of a motor road between Gallabat and Delgi for the purpose of transporting the materials necessary for the works (including explosives for blasting) and importation of such materials free of duty; it is expressly understood that no materials of war shall be introduced without the specific permission of the Imperial Ethiopian Government.

This road will be open for general use.

ARTICLE 8.

Her Majesty the Queen of Queens of Ethiopia will permit the erection and maintenance at His Britannic Majesty's Government's expense of a telegraph line from Gallabat through Delgi to the dam. The Imperial Ethiopian Government shall have the right to send messages over this line free of charge, should they at any time wish to do so.

ARTICLE 9.

The riparian rights of the inhabitants dwelling on both sides of the Blue Nile throughout its length in Ethiopian territory to use these waters for domestic purposes, as well as for the cultivation of food crops necessary to their own subsistence will not be questioned, but it is understood that no attempt will be made to arrest, divert, or obstruct in any way the flow of the Blue Nile or its tributaries in a manner contrary to article 3 of the treaty with the Emperor Menelik of the 15th May, 1902.

ARTICLE 10.

His Britannic Majesty's Government shall so construct and control the dam that the water of the lake shall never rise higher than the highest level hitherto recorded in the rainy season, in such a way that the churches on the islands in the lake or on its shores shall not suffer damage through inundation.

ARTICLE 11.

In consideration for the permission and facilities granted by Her Majesty the Queen of Queens of Ethiopia in accordance with this treaty, His Britannic Majesty's Government, in addition to giving the guarantees and assurances provided for above, will make payment to the Imperial Ethiopian Government as follows:—

- (a.) An annual payment of £10,000 rental from the signature of the concession agreement until completion of the dam.
- (b.) A sum of £100,000 on completion of the dam.
- (c.) A rental of £20,000 per annum for the first five years after completion, £30,000 per annum for the second five years, and £40,000 per annum for the third five years.

At the end of this period the situation shall be reviewed in order to estimate the actual net profits made by the Sudan Government from the use of water stored in Lake Tsana, it being agreed that the rental shall then be adjusted to represent one-fifth of such profits. In order to calculate profits for this purpose the average of the five years preceding the date of review will be taken. A similar review shall be made every ten years thereafter and the rental adjusted in accordance with its result.

ARTICLE 12.

The high contracting parties agree that any dispute that may arise between them as to the proper interpretation or application of any of the provisions of the present treaty shall, at the request of either party, be referred to arbitration.

The court to which such disputes shall be referred shall be the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague, unless in any particular case the two contracting parties agree otherwise.

ARTICLE 13.

The present treaty shall be ratified and shall come into force on the exchange of the ratifications of His Britannic Majesty and the Queen of Queens of Ethiopia, which shall take place at Addis Ababa as soon as possible.

In faith whereof the undersigned have signed the present treaty and have thereto affixed their seals.

Done at Addis Ababa in duplicate, in the English and Amharic languages, both texts being considered as official, the day of , 1927.

[J 1064/24/1]

No. 195.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 28.)

(No. 61.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, April 27, 1927.

MR. RUSSELL'S telegram No. 15 to Cairo of 2nd May, 1923.

In view of discretionary powers granted to me, I propose, on Mr. Home's advice, to omit from suggestions for treaty article 7, now article 8, regarding telegraph lines. I understand Sir G. Schuster agrees.

I would mention verbally to Ras Tafari question of wireless communication with the Sudan and ask him if he considers it desirable to refer to this in treaty.

(Repeated to Khartum, No. 33.)

[J 1065/24/1]

No. 196.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received April 29.)

(No. 150.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Cairo, April 28, 1927.

ADDIS ABABA telegram No. 9 to Cairo.

As matter is urgent, and as I consider such questions are essentially matters for Mr. Bentinck's discretion, I agree to [? group omitted] as suggested by him.

(Repeated to Khartum, No. 49, and Addis Ababa.)

[J 1054/24/1]

No. 197.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Lord Lloyd (Cairo).

(No. 117.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, April 28, 1927.

ADDIS ABABA telegram to you No. 9 of 25th April: Lake Tsana.

As Mr. Bentinck is ready to present your draft treaty instead of his own suggestions, we agree to this. Our formal version of your treaty plus preamble, conclusion and possible arbitration clause, copies of which leave by to-day's bags for Cairo and Addis Ababa, when received can be brought up to date with additions and deletions decided on since it was drafted, shown to Ras Tafari and substituted for your original draft, from which it differs only phraseologically. Our version is not intended as a last word, but merely as convenient pattern to obviate need for long telegrams during negotiations.

I still think point 6 in Mr. Bentinck's telegram No. 45 must be left to his discretion.

I agree to proposed amendment of article 6.

I prefer my opening of article 5, but will defer to Mr. Bentinck if he objects to it.

(Repeated to Addis Ababa, No. 56.)

[J 1064/24/1]

No. 198.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 59.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, April 30, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 61 of 27th April: Telegraph line from Delgi to Gallabao.

Subject to concurrence of Cairo and Khartum, I agree.

(Repeated to Cairo, No. 120.)

[J 1084/24/1]

No. 199.

Lord Lloyd to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 1.)

(No. 160.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Cairo, May 1, 1927.

ADDRESSED to Addis Ababa.

Your telegram No. 61 to Foreign Office.

I agree.

(Repeated to Khartum.)

No. 200.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 2.)

(No. 65.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, April 28, 1927.

KHARTUM telegram No. 49 to Cairo, last paragraph.

Mr. Home informs me that 50,000 dollars has already been promised Ras Hailu. I consider that this, and possibly promises to the other two provincial Governors concerned, must be entirely independent of sums mentioned in treaty (see paragraph 3 of my telegram No. 32, and Foreign Office reply, No. 38). Owing to the absence of His Majesty's consul, Dangila, confidential promise of this nature could not be made to Governors concerned until the end of 1927.

If a promise of a personal payment of £10,000 was ever hinted at to Ras Taffari this must be independent of sums mentioned in treaty (see Cairo telegram No. 36 to Foreign Office, 15th December, 1922). I can find no record of this having actually been made, but have telegraphed to Major Dodds. Despatch follows.

(Repeated to Khartum, No. 34.)

[J 1158/24/1]

No. 201.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 5.)

(No. 69.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, May 4, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 109 to Cairo and Khartum telegram No. 49 to Cairo.

On receipt of these I brought my original "suggestions" up to date as modified by subsequent correspondence. This, with memorandum, I handed privately in English and Amharic to Ras Taffari yesterday, as otherwise it might not have been possible to do so until after Italian Royal visit. We confirmed previous agreement, that Ras Taffari, after studying documents, would give me his private opinion on them before showing them to the Empress. I drew attention to important points and also asked his advice as to insertion or otherwise of "motor road," "explosives," "wireless," &c. Ras Taffari replied that these were all minor matters which could be settled if main concessions were granted, but, in general, he thought it best be as precise as possible so as to avoid all possible misunderstandings in the future.

(Repeated to Khartum, No. 35, for Cairo.)

No. 202.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 5.)

(No. 70.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, May 4, 1927.

MY immediately preceding telegram.

He expressed much pleasure when I told him of prospective royal visit if concession granted.

He said that he would tell the Empress.

(Repeated to Khartum, No. 36, for Cairo.)

[J 1163/24/1]

No. 203.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 5.)

(No. 71.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, May 4, 1927.

MY telegram No. 69 to Foreign Office.

Your telegram No. 117 to Cairo is not clear. Draft presented was my original memorandum and "suggestion" as modified by subsequent correspondence. They will probably undergo further modifications before being officially shown to the Empress.

[J 1163/24/1]

No. 204.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 62.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, May 6, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 71 of 4th May: Lake Tsana.

My telegram No. 117 to Cairo was based on misreading of your telegram No. 57, which I took to refer to Lord Lloyd's draft treaty as opposed to your suggestions. But this is of no consequence, as your suggestions actually presented served the purpose equally well.

On the other hand, when you receive my version based partly on your suggestions and partly on Lord Lloyd's draft, you might bring it up to date and give it with translation to Ras Taffari. This, being in proper form, ought to be version eventually given to Empress after being altered according to what you decide with Ras Taffari.

[J 1254/24/1]

No. 205.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 13.)

(No. 78.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, May 11, 1927.

MY telegram No. 68.

Owing to preparations and forthcoming Royal visit, Ras Taffari says that he will be unable to study memorandum until after 1st June, so that leave asked for in my telegram No. 73 need not delay negotiations.

No. 206.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 70.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, May 13, 1927.

SIR G. SCHUSTER, who has arrived in London, is authorised to deal with Lake Tsana on behalf of Sudan from here. You should address to me telegrams on this subject which normally you would address to Khartum, to whom repetitions for information only or for communication to Cairo need be sent, from whom you should not expect comments.

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[J 1364/24/1]

No. 207.

Mr. MacMichael to Mr. Murray.—(Received May 23.)

My dear Murray,

Sudan Government, Khartum, May 4, 1927.

I ENCLOSE a copy of a private letter received from Cheesman, dated from Wanbera (approximate longitude $35^{\circ} 40'$ and latitude $10^{\circ} 38'$) on the 14th April. The letter reached Gallabat on the 27th April, 1927, and Khartum on the 4th May, 1927.

I am also sending copies privately to MacGregor, Schuster and Bentinck.

Yours sincerely,

H. A. MACMICHAEL.

N.B.—The "Pasha" mentioned was probably Gorrington—the general. I am having research made to see if any route report can be traced, but I have little hope.

H. A. MACM.

Enclosure in No. 207.

Mr. Cheesman to Mr. MacMichael.

Wanbera (Wanbera on map "Africa 1:2 mill.
Abyssinia N.," Approx. long. $35^{\circ} 40'$, lat. $10^{\circ} 38'$),
April 14, 1927.

Dear MacMichael,

I AM addressing this officially in case you are away. I have had no mails for fourteen weeks. I cannot write a despatch here, so am sending a few notes of a semi-private description. Please pass on anything in them to Addis Ababa that you think will be of interest to them.

I had to alter my original intention of passing through Bumbode to the Sudan for many reasons. Firstly, the rain started unusually early this year, and all the 60 miles from Wanbera to Bumbode is through low-lying fly country, and the rains will have started the fly. Secondly, I find that this particular part of the river has been already mapped by previous expeditions, Weld Blundell, "Geographical Journal," June 1906 and the MacMillan Expedition from Abu Sheneina to Addis Ababa. In the latter, Colonel Lewis mapped the river from Sudan to Dabok Ford, latitude $10^{\circ} 8'$, longitude $35^{\circ} 24'$. It seems therefore unnecessary to incur the expense of duplicating their work, as I should certainly lose most of my mules in the month it would take them to go and return, and probably some of the men. If it is thought necessary for any reason to do this bit again, it can be done without risk next January or February. It turns out to be a well-used trade route with a good road, although, as usual, I could find out nothing about it until I actually got on the spot. It keeps close to the Abbai shore all the way, and could be accomplished with ordinarily loaded mules as a routine journey, from the consulate to the Sudan. Another contributory reason is that all my men, with the exception of two, absolutely refuse to go down into the low country. This has weighed very little in the decision as I expected it, and should have taken the two and made up the numbers from local merchants' men and sacked the rest, if the country had not already been mapped. As things are I have not pressed the point, the risk to mule-flesh having already decided my course. Since the same risk of fly applies to the Gallabat journey so late in the season, I must now return to Dangila to rest mules and repair kit (both men and mules are looking weary and worn and tents and baggage are in rags and splinters), and then go on to Addis Ababa, as this road is the only one free from fly. I can't reach there much under eight weeks, from now; it seems rough to have to turn back within eight days of civilisation.

We have had a very hard time but fairly successful, in spite of Abyssinia and the Abyssinians. Ras Hailio told me they had always been successful in choking off Abbai aspirants previously and kept one particular precipice for extreme cases, but as I seemed to like precipices he was resigned to the inevitable and would help me. I have completed all I expected to and a bit more. If my notes arrive safely with me it should be possible to make a fair map of the Abbai right bank, from Lake Tsana to the Sudan, with the addition of the information available of the last 60 miles. We have made a 350-mile point (more than double that as hounds ran) practically all unmapped except in about five places where trade routes cross fords, and here the

detail was more correct. The map of the rest is crammed full of names, but so inaccurate—mountains given as villages, rivers as districts, &c.—that I do not know which was most use in helping me to find the way, the map or the Abyssinian officials. The bearings taken should be continuous throughout, but there may be gaps, as I have had no time to plot in the field and find out where the flaws were. From here I have been able to connect up with two hills in Fung Province by compass bearing, which will help. So far, I have been able to find only one on the map. The Abyssinian and Sudan names of the other are apparently different. It is reported by Abyssinians here that a former Governor of Singa, a certain pasha, name unknown, came up to Wanbera from Bumbode about twenty years ago to buy mules and returned. His report might be available if he made one, and would be useful, as he must have travelled along the Abbai, i.e., by the same road as Colonel Lewis and the MacMillan Expedition.

The Abbai itself is a great disappointment; even here below Wanbera, 350 miles from the lake, it is not much more than what a Scotchman would call a "wee burn."

At 20 miles below Lake Tsana, an Abyssinian has jumped over it and jumped back; and wherever I have seen it, it is the same small river, each reach so monotonously alike that one cannot remember which is which, and it disappears round a cliff at half a mile, both up and down stream, and sometimes cascades over rocks, always one, sometimes two. After seeing the same river at Sennar and Khartum perhaps one expects too much. In fact, I have only been thrilled once; that was at the Tisesat Falls, which are magnificent. We managed to keep to the river shore for the first 60 miles below the lake, each day becoming increasingly difficult as the mountains grew larger and progress slower and slower, till at a place called Gousha we had a rotten time; all the men were ill with influenza and two died, and the steep roads or cow-tracks were appalling, and it was a case of spending the rest of the year in one parish or getting out and travelling along the valley top edge.

At this time all the men decided to return to Dangila, but by threats and cajolery alternately I have managed to work them along as far as Wanbera. They were all especially enlisted to travel along the low country of the Abbai.

We have kept to the valley edge for the rest of the way, and I made six special journeys down to examine the water closely at intervals where it seemed likely to have altered. These journeys meant a descent of about 3,000 feet in five or six hours, covering 3 to 6 miles crow-fly from the valley top to the water's edge. I took on these journeys three lightly loaded mules with small tent and three locally employed men, who were not afraid of the low country, my own men being unnerved and useless.

Tsahai Effendi and the Sudan police accompanied me. Tsahai Effendi has done extremely well, and so have the three Sudan police.

As to the possibilities of getting a boat on to the river: Dejan, the nearest ford to Addis Ababa, seems to be the very highest up-stream that it would have any chance of success; above this shallows and cataracts would make a speedy end, and even below or down-stream of this many cataracts would be met, but there is more breathing space in between. A special crew of experienced boatmen would be required, and even then one would not lack adventure until about Wanbera, where the mountains give place to flat country once more and the water flows deeper and more level and consequently more placidly.

Another point that has arisen in my mind is what proportion of water is evaporated on this journey. I see in Mr. Grabham's report he adopts 10 per cent. as the transmission loss, but I should feel more comfortable about it if I could contend with an engineer who has experience in these hot dry river beds, I holding that it is 90 per cent. loss and he proving that I was wrong. The distance traversed by the Tsana water from the lake to Wanbera must be close on 1,000 miles in its to-and-fro course (afterwards in the deeper water evaporation would be less rapid). The fall in the land prevents it acquiring any depth anywhere; in fact, there are surprising number of fords not marked on the map. Almost every district has its ford; some have two. The current throughout this 1,000 miles flows in gravel, boulder and sandbed. The main flow is deep and swift, but even this is fordable from about February on foot most of the way down, as the ford proves. On one side or on both the sides the water flows slowly in a shallow layer over flat spaces of stones and gravel, the water being from two inches to half an inch deep. The temperature of the gravel uncovered by water is 130° , so with the addition of a hot dry air overhead and the soakage in the dry sand along the edge, the evaporation and loss must be very great. These conditions are prevailing at the time when the Tsana dam would be open.

[16460]

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Several small streams with a steady flow in the higher reaches dry up completely before they arrive at the Abbai at this time of year, that would be more than 100 per cent. (sic). Again, with all the tributaries that I have crossed and that have joined the Abbai since it left Lake Tsana—which ought to have considerably increased its volume—there seems to be very little more water here than when it left the lake. If in any Tsana agreement the upper and lower limits of water levels are fixed, and if, after the dam began to operate, the loss was greater than had been estimated and insufficient water were arriving in the Sudan, it might be difficult to persuade the Abyssinian Government to alter the agreement to raise or lower the sill.

I have also kept in view the possibility of an alternative scheme in the event of the Tsana negotiations not being concluded and have been on the look-out for another suitable site lower down, that is with a big natural reservoir, with the mountains meeting down-stream to form a suitable site for a dam. I cannot say I have found any such. But of course there are many places where smaller dams on the Indian tank system could be built much nearer the Sudan, so that evaporation would be less and of course every gallon of water stored could be utilised.

I have just put down these notes, as I thought they might be useful, and as it will be a long time before I can sit down to collect my scattered thoughts and write a considered report.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

R. E. CHEESMAN.

P.S.—I am sending this to Gallabat with men to bring my fourteen weeks' collection of letters. After this I shall discontinue sending runners to Gallabat, as I hope to be on the way to Addis Ababa.

R. E. C.

[J 1363/24/1]

No. 208.

Mr. MacMichael to Mr. Murray.—(Received May 23.)

My dear Murray,

Khartum, May 7, 1927.

IN continuation of my letter of the 4th May, I send you a note written by Mr. MacGregor on the subject.

Yours sincerely,

H. A. MACMICHAEL.

Enclosure in No. 208.

Mr. MacGregor to Lieutenant-Colonel Sir G. Schuster.

(Secret.)

Dear Schuster,

Khartum, May 6, 1927.

YOUR letter dated the 8th April, 1927.

This question of flooded foreshores is dealt with at p. 34 of the Grabham and Black Report. We might have to pay some compensation perhaps, but it is not likely to be much. So far as I know the Abyssinians have never raised this question, and I do not think it is likely to present a difficulty. That is Grabham's view.

2. Another of Cheeseman's interesting and graphic reports has come in from near the Roseires frontier, dated the 14th April. He lays much stress on the apparent loss of water, or at least the absence of any increase in spite of the fact that tributaries are falling in all the way down. There is a perfectly simple explanation of the conditions noticed by Cheeseman, and we need not have any fear that there are phenomenal losses in this reach of the river.

3. I cannot find a record of the date when Cheeseman started on his trek, but from his remark that he has not had a mail for fourteen weeks it appears that he must have started at the beginning of January. During all this time the river discharge has been falling rapidly away. The table on pp. 66 and 67 of the Grabham and Black Report shows that between the 1st January and the middle of April the discharge leaving the lake drops from about 100 to less than 20 cubic metres a second. The natural river at Makwar falls from about 250 to about 50 during this season. This decrease of about 80 per cent. (rather more in fact since the figures are five day meant)

goes far to explain Cheeseman's impression that 90 per cent. of the water has been lost by evaporation.

4. A further point is that in the wide stretches of shingle and gravel through which the diminished stream pursues its winding course there must be an appreciable invisible flow. This would be forced out into the open again at the narrows which would probably be inaccessible to the explorer. It would be forced to the surface at such a point, for example, as the Ganis rapid above Roseires, and would not be lost again to a serious extent during its subsequent course through the plains to Makwar.

5. It will never be possible, owing to the inflow from the tributaries, to assess the losses here with the same degree of accuracy as is possible in other reaches of the Nile. It may be that they will exceed the 10 per cent. assumed by Black; but I am quite satisfied that they cannot, in any way, threaten the soundness of the reservoir project.

6. Cheeseman expected, no doubt, to see a lordly river, and is surprised to find what he calls a "wee burn." The table of discharges which I have already quoted shows that the discharge from the lake fell in June 1921 to 4.1 cubic metres a second, equivalent to the pumps at Hag Abdulla. The maximum flood at Makwar is estimated at 12,000 cubic metres a second. The contrast between these figures shows how easy it might be to get a false impression from a few visual observations at different points in the river's course unless they are supplemented by a knowledge of the hydrology of the river.

Yours sincerely,

R. M. MACGREGOR.

[J 1417/24/1]

No. 209.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 28.)

(No. 89.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, May 26, 1927.

MY telegram No. 69.

I have kept my Italian colleague informed of various stages in negotiations. To-day he asked me if he might see memorandum which I had given to Ras Tafari, as case foreshadowed in Anglo-Italian notes might arise in which his help might prove useful. I told him that memorandum was quite informal, and that on my return from Somaliland Ras Tafari and I would discuss it again and put it into shape before it was shown to Empress. I would ask your leave to show it to him when it was in proper shape.

[J 1418/24/1]

No. 210.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 28.)

(No. 90.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, May 26, 1927.

MY immediately preceding telegram.

Italian Minister said nothing, but did not seem particularly pleased.

My view is that it is more courteous towards Ras Tafari not to show memorandum to anyone at present, but if you think it advisable for me to show it to my Italian colleague now there is nothing in it which we need mind Italians or anyone else seeing. Of course, I do not want to irritate my Italian colleague, but see my despatch No. 227, 1926, paragraph 2.

[J 1438/24/1]

No. 211.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 30.)

(No. 125. Very Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, May 2, 1927.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 65 of the 28th ultimo regarding the enquiry from the Governor-General of the Sudan as to the promises to be made to the local chiefs ruling the territories surrounding Lake Tsana of payments in the event of the

Tsana agreement being signed, I have the honour to report that in my opinion such payments must be made by the Sudan Government directly through His Majesty's consul at Dangila, and must have no connection whatsoever with any payments I may make to the Central Government at Addis Ababa. I understand from Mr. Home that a promise of 50,000 dollars (£5,000) has already been made by him to Ras Hailu, and of this Sir George Schuster is aware. That being the case, a promise of an equal amount must be made to Ras Gugsa Wolye, in whose territory about two-thirds of the lake is situated, and who is besides the husband of the Empress. The territory of Dejazmach Ayalewu, on the other hand, only just touches the lake, and will not be affected either by the dam or by the proposed road from Gallabat to Delgi. Mr. Home suggests, and I agree, that a promise of 20,000 dollars (£2,000) would be sufficient for him.

2. We must not forget the Empress, Ras Taffari and Ras Kassa, who are the principal people with whom I shall have to negotiate. I consider that their assistance can be rewarded by a handsome gift from the King or from His Majesty's Government, to be made by the Royal Prince who may visit this country in the event of the agreement being signed. I am not in a position to suggest out of what fund such presents must be taken. Sooner or later a British Prince will have to return Ras Taffari's visit to England, and, quite apart from the Lake Tsana concession, he will have to bring handsome gifts for the Empress and Ras Taffari. Our "Presents" vote of £500 a year will not nearly suffice to cover the cost of such presents.

3. In this connection, I may mention that the Duke of the Abruzzi is bringing with him, as a present to the Empress, an Isotta Fraschini car (the Italian equivalent of a Rolls-Royce) and a 5-ton tank as a present for Ras Taffari. It will be impossible for a British Prince to bring less. Ras Taffari has no really good car, and is hoping that we shall some day present him with a Rolls-Royce. The same applies to Ras Kassa. I realise that these suggestions are premature, but I gather that the Sudan Government are anxious to have some idea in advance of what they are likely to be let in for. It might also be helpful for me to be in a position to drop an indiscreet hint in advance to Ras Taffari and Ras Kassa.

4. As I now learn from Major Dodds that he never intimated to Ras Taffari, as he had asked leave to do, that he would receive a personal payment of £10,000 in War Loan, my above suggestions for three handsome presents should prove more economical, if effective.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch to Cairo and Khartum.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

P.S.—Woizeru Manen, the wife of Ras Taffari, will also have to be remembered on the occasion of a British Royal visit. She is a personality of considerable importance. A piece of jewellery or a handsome table ornament would probably prove acceptable to her.

C. H. B.

[J 1445/24/1]

No. 212.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received May 30.)

(No. 135.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, May 10, 1927.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 69 of the 4th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of the memorandum and suggestions for a treaty which I handed privately to Ras Taffari on the 3rd instant. In presenting the memorandum to his Highness as soon as possible, I was influenced by the fact that the Maharao of Kutch was expected here the following day, and that after his visit his Highness was likely to be more than preoccupied with the forthcoming visit of the Duke of the Abruzzi on the 18th instant.

2. I was quite alone with his Highness, and our conversation was in French. I explained to him that, as he had asked me to let him know everything we wanted, I had added to the memorandum an annex in the shape of suggestions for a treaty. I pointed out that our case was based on our treaty with the Emperor Menelik signed some twenty-five years ago; that what we asked was in the interests of mankind; that the water was not merely wanted for cotton-growing, but for the food of the increasing populations of the Sudan and of Egypt; that ample guarantees were given against the

inundation of the churches, both in the memorandum and in article 9 of the suggestions for a treaty. I drew his Highness's attention to the last paragraph of the memorandum, in which it was stated that the concession would not imply any encroachment whatsoever upon Ethiopian sovereignty, and that the maintenance of the independence of the Empire of Ethiopia was a cardinal point in the policy of His Britannic Majesty's Government. I then asked his Highness's private opinion regarding article 7 of the suggestions for a treaty, i.e., as to whether the road, which would obviously be required for bringing up motor lorries, should be called a motor road or merely a road; whether mention should at this stage be made of "explosives," which would be required for blasting purposes; also whether mention should be made in the treaty of our desire to erect a telegraph line or a wireless telegraph station, as obviously some rapid means of communication with the Sudan would be necessary during the construction of the dam. I pointed out that the interests of the local inhabitants were not being lost sight of. Further, that in article 10 of the suggestions for a treaty the Government of the Sudan had endeavoured to meet his Highness's wishes so that Abyssinia should have a fair share in the profits which might eventually be derived by the Sudan Government from the use of the waters. I added that these profits, which his Highness thought would be very considerable, would certainly not accrue for some time to come, and that in the opinion of the Governor-General of the Sudan they would not be by any means as great as his Highness seemed to anticipate. I ended by pointing out that I was not asking for anything which I thought to be contrary to the interests of Abyssinia. I reminded him, however, of your statement in the House that he was, of course, the best judge of what was in the interests of Abyssinia. If there should be anything I said which he should consider contrary to those interests, I relied upon him to tell me so, and we would then see what means could be found for meeting his objections. If we could reach a satisfactory settlement, I was convinced that not only would the people of Abyssinia and the Sudan benefit, but also the people of Egypt and of Europe.

3. His Highness observed that as regards what I had said about the motor road, explosives, &c., these were matters of minor importance which could easily be settled, provided the main concession were agreed to. He thought, however, that in drawing up the treaty we should be as precise as possible so as to avoid any possible grounds for misunderstanding in the future. I replied that in this I was in entire agreement with his Highness. He then promised to study the memorandum, and when he had done so to give me the benefit of his private and unofficial opinion on the subject in order that it might be altered, if necessary, before presentation to the Empress and the Abyssinian chiefs. I pointed out that if only verbal alterations were required it might be possible to make these without reference home. If, however, he were to suggest alterations of a more important nature, I should be obliged to telegraph for instructions, which would, of course, cause delay. His Highness hinted vaguely at the possibility of eventually submitting to me a memorandum with counter-proposals.

4. Before leaving the subject, I said to his Highness that I had a secret to tell him, which I begged him to communicate to the Empress. It was that the King had authorised me to say that as soon as the Tsana Concession was signed, His Majesty would arrange that one of his sons should come here at the head of a special Foreign Office mission to see the Empress and His Imperial Highness, and to return the visit which he had paid to Europe in 1924. His Highness was much gratified, and said that he would tell the Empress, and that the visit would be most agreeable. I added that, although there were already rumours in the town of this visit, I had not mentioned it to my colleagues or to anyone outside my staff. I hoped that the visit might not be too long delayed.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch to Khartum and Cairo.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 1 in No. 212.

Memorandum handed to Ras Taffari by Mr. Bentinck.

WITH a view to strengthening still further and placing upon solid and permanent foundations the friendship so happily existing between His Britannic Majesty's Government and the Imperial Government of Ethiopia, and basing himself upon article 3 of the treaty concluded between His Majesty the Emperor Menelik II, King of

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Kings of Ethiopia, and the representative of His Majesty King Edward VII on the 15th May, 1902, His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa has the honour, by direction of His Britannic Majesty's Government, to ask the Imperial Ethiopian Government to accord to His Britannic Majesty's Government, acting on behalf of the Government of the Sudan, the necessary permission to construct across the head waters of the Blue Nile, at the outlet of Lake Tsana, the works contemplated at the time of the above-mentioned treaty with the Emperor Menelik.

2. As the Imperial Ethiopian Government are well aware, since the beginning of the world the waters of the Nile have flowed through the Sudan and Egypt and have been used free from time immemorial, giving life and prosperity to millions of people. Every rainy season the surplus waters of Lake Tsana, however, have flowed away into the sea without it having been possible to use them to the best advantage for purposes of cultivation owing to insufficient control.

3. The importance of the waters of the Blue Nile for the prosperity of the millions of inhabitants of the Sudan, of Egypt, and, it may be said, of mankind in general was recognised not only by the British Government, but also by the Emperor Menelik, when, on the 18th March, 1902, before the conclusion of the treaty above referred to, His Majesty authorised Mr. Alfred Ilg to exchange notes with Sir John Harrington, the representative of His Majesty King Edward VII, whereby His Majesty the Emperor Menelik promised that "il n'y aura aucune intervention pour les eaux du Nil bleu et du lac Tsana excepté en consultation avec le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique et le Gouvernement du Soudan; qu'en cas d'une telle intervention, toutes les autres conditions étant égales, préférence va être donnée aux propositions du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique et du Gouvernement du Soudan; et que Sa Majesté l'Empereur Ménélik n'a aucune intention de donner une concession regardant le Nil bleu et le lac Tsana à d'autres qu'au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique et au Gouvernement du Soudan ou à un de leurs sujets."

4. In fulfilment of their duty towards the peoples of those lands through which the Blue Nile flows, to foster in every way the development of cultivation, His Britannic Majesty's Government have, as the Imperial Government are well aware, long been desirous of effecting the control, hitherto lacking, of the waters of Lake Tsana, in order that the surplus should not run to waste. The most effective method of achieving this control has appeared to His Britannic Majesty's Government to be the construction of a dam at the outlet of that lake and the deepening of the channel where necessary near the dam.

5. His Britannic Majesty's Government have therefore instructed His Majesty's Minister to approach the Imperial Government of Ethiopia in order to reach an agreement with them from which the people of Ethiopia, no less than the people of the Sudan and of Egypt, may derive benefit.

6. His Britannic Majesty's Government are anxious to construct the important works for which they have so long waited, and they are happy to be in a position to assure the Imperial Ethiopian Government that the churches in and around the lake, whose interests they have had under careful and sympathetic consideration, shall not suffer damage from the dam. The effect of the dam will be to maintain the surface of the lake at its normal high level for a few months each year. If at any time there should appear to be any likelihood of the flood limit of the lake being passed, the gates at the dam would at once be opened so as to prevent this. Nor will His Britannic Majesty's Government lose sight of the interests of the local inhabitants, whose prosperity and progress may, it is hoped, benefit from the works in contemplation.

7. It will be distinctly understood that any rights which may be accorded to His Majesty's Government to construct works for the control of the water supply at Lake Tsana and the Blue Nile shall not imply any encroachment whatever upon Ethiopian sovereignty. Any such agreement with His Majesty's Government would in no way affect the existing entire independence of the Empire of Ethiopia, the maintenance of which is a cardinal point in the policy of His Britannic Majesty's Government.

May 3, 1927.

Enclosure 2 in No. 212.

Suggestions for a Treaty.

BY article 3 of the treaty signed at Addis Ababa on the 15th May, 1902, between the representative of His Majesty King Edward VII, &c., &c., and His Majesty the Emperor Menelik II, &c., &c., His Majesty the Emperor Menelik II, &c., &c., engaged

himself towards the Government of His Britannic Majesty not to construct, or to allow to be constructed, any work across the Blue Nile, Lake Tsana or the Sobat which would arrest the flow of their waters into the Nile, except in agreement with His Britannic Majesty's Government or the Government of the Sudan. Therefore His Britannic Majesty's Government propose to suggest to the Imperial Ethiopian Government that a treaty be concluded upon the following lines:—

His Britannic Majesty's Government will ask the Imperial Ethiopian Government—

1. To permit His Britannic Majesty's Government to construct and maintain a dam across the head-waters of the Blue Nile at the outlet of Lake Tsana for the purpose of regulating the flow of water from that lake, and to deepen the channel where necessary near the dam.

2. To permit the entry into Abyssinia of such personnel, engineers and labourers, skilled and unskilled, as may be necessary for the construction and maintenance of the dam.

To guarantee the safety of all those employed in the works and to ensure that they are unhindered in the execution of their duties, as well as to guarantee the safety of the works themselves. His Britannic Majesty's Government will give preference to local labour as far as possible.

3. After the completion of the works, His Britannic Majesty's Government will see that the permanent staff is limited to the smallest number of engineers and assistants compatible with the proper operation and care of the works.

4. To permit the erection of buildings necessary for the aforesaid personnel, engineers and labourers, and for storehouses, offices, wharves, &c., in connection with the dam.

5. To facilitate His Britannic Majesty's Government in obtaining materials, such as stone, timber, &c., in the neighbourhood of the lake for all work relating to the dam, and to facilitate the employment of local labour.

6. To permit His Britannic Majesty's Government to place small steamers and boats on the lake for the transport of materials required in connection with the dam.

7. To permit His Britannic Majesty's Government to construct and maintain a road between Gallabat and Delgi for the purposes of transporting materials necessary for the works. These materials, including explosives for blasting purposes, to be imported free of customs duties and local tolls. It is expressly understood that no materials of war shall be introduced without the specific permission of the Imperial Ethiopian Government. This road will be open for general use.

8. The riparian rights of the inhabitants dwelling on both sides of the Blue Nile throughout its length in Ethiopian territory to use this water for domestic purposes, as well as for the cultivation of food crops necessary for their own subsistence, will not be questioned, but it is understood that no attempt will be made to arrest, divert or obstruct in any way the flow of the Blue Nile or its tributaries in a manner contrary to article 3 of the treaty with the Emperor Menelik of the 15th May, 1902.

9. His Britannic Majesty's Government will bind themselves so to construct and control the dam that the waters of the lake shall never rise higher than the highest level hitherto recorded in the rainy season. His Britannic Majesty's Government will consequently be able to give a full guarantee that the churches on the islands in, and on the banks of, the lake shall not suffer damage through inundation.

10. In consideration for the permission and facilities which it is hoped that the Imperial Ethiopian Government will be able to grant, and in addition to the guarantees and the assurances which, as stated above, His Britannic Majesty's Government are prepared to give, His Britannic Majesty's Government will also make a payment to the Imperial Ethiopian Government as follows:—

(a.) £30,000 on conclusion of the present agreement.

Should, unfortunately, the works not be completed within three years after signature, His Britannic Majesty's Government would be prepared, at the end of the three years, to make an annual payment of £10,000 until the completion of the dam.

(b.) £100,000 on completion of the dam.

(c.) A rent of £20,000 per annum for the first five years after completion of the dam; £30,000 for the second five years; £40,000 for the third five years.

At the end of this period the situation could be reviewed in order to estimate the actual net profits made by the Sudan Government from the use of the water stored in

Lake Tsana, it being agreed that the rental should then be adjusted to represent one-fifth of such profit. In order to calculate the profits for this purpose, the average of the five years preceding the date of the settlement will be taken. A similar review to be made every ten years thereafter.

[J 1418/24/1] No. 213.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 76.) *Foreign Office, June 1, 1927.*
(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 90 of the 26th May: Lake Tsana.
I wish you to keep in the closest possible touch with your Italian colleague. Any suspicion on his side that we are not working in perfect frankness and loyalty must create difficulties in Rome and later in Addis Ababa. Unless, therefore, you have reason to think that an immediate communication to the Italian Minister would seriously anger Ras Tafari, I think it desirable that you should at once take the Italian Minister into your confidence.

[J 1484/24/1] No. 214.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 2.)

(No. 92.) *Addis Ababa, May 30, 1927.*
(Telegraphic.)

MY telegrams Nos. 89 and 90.
Ras Kassa told me yesterday that he had read memorandum which I had handed to Ras Tafari. He thought agents were reaching agreement without much difficulty or delay. It would be chiefly slow bargaining; he advised me, however, not to call in the help of third party, as this would put up the backs of the Abyssinians.
Ras Kassa's language confirms me in my opinion that it will be better not to give note to my Italian colleague until after it has been shown to Empress.
I could at the same time tell Italian Minister that I shall not need his help unless I ask for it.
(Repeated to Cairo, No. 19, for transmission to Khartum by safe hand.)

[J 1506/24/1] No. 215.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 3.)

(No. 94.) *Addis Ababa, June 2, 1927.*
(Telegraphic.) R.
MAJOR CHEESEMAM tells me that he wrote to the civil secretary, Khartum, early in May suggesting that proposed road to Tsana might preferably go from Roseires straight to the dam instead of running from Gallabat to Delgi.
For many reasons, Mr. Home and I do not favour this route, but please telegraph if you consider it preferable that I should ask Ras Tafari to agree to my altering words in article 7 of memorandum from "Gallabat to Delgi" to "from Sudan frontier to the lake" (see my telegram No. 69 and my despatch No. 135 to Foreign Office).
(Repeated to Khartum, No. 39.)

[J 1555/24/1] No. 216.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 7.)

(No. 96.) *Addis Ababa, June 6, 1927.*
(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 76.
I have given copy of memorandum to my Italian colleague in strictest confidence, explaining that it is still unofficial and subject to probable alterations. He seemed pleased. He said he did not propose to send it to Rome, as he presumed that Italian Government would eventually receive it from London. I asked him not to take any

action here unless and until I should ask for his help. He expressed concurrence. My German colleague tells me that Ras Tafari asked his views on memorandum, but has not yet shown it to him. He expresses desire that I shall succeed. Belgian Minister says that he let Ras Tafari know he considered it foolish to consult German Minister.

I do not know whether you would think it desirable to ask German and Belgian Governments to instruct their representatives to adopt friendly neutrality, and when consulted to point out that agreement could only be to the advantage of all concerned.

[J 1568/24/1] No. 217.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 80.) *Foreign Office, June 11, 1927.*
(Telegraphic.) R.

YOUR telegram No. 94 of the 2nd June: Road from Sudan frontier to Lake Tsana.

Major Cheeseman's letter has not yet been received here, but *prima facie* we think, after consulting Sir George Schuster, that alteration would be impolitic. The Gallabat road is already important trade route, and will become more so when the railway reaches Gedaref.

[J 1566/24/1] No. 218.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 81.) *Foreign Office, June 11, 1927.*
(Telegraphic.)

YOUR despatch No. 125 of the 2nd May: Personal payments and presents in connection with granting of Tsana Concession.

Sir George Schuster, who has been consulted, thinks that you must be extremely chary in the matter of promises, as the Sudan Government cannot guarantee to find an indefinite sum of money. The promise to Ras Hailu was authorised by Mr. Russell without Sudan authority, which must be obtained in respect of all future commitments.

Please send by despatch detailed estimate of what you expect Sudan to give both in personal payments and presents.

[J 1555/24/1] No. 219.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 82.) *Foreign Office, June 14, 1927.*
(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 96 of the 7th June: Communication of Lake Tsana memorandum to Mr. Bentinck's colleagues.

In view of your Belgian colleague's record, I hesitate to ask Belgian Government to do anything, as his interpretation of his instructions might create difficulties for you in the long run. This being so, I propose to say nothing either to Brussels or to Berlin.

No. 220.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 20.)

(No. 101.) *Addis Ababa, June 17, 1927.*
(Telegraphic.)

YOUR telegram No. 82.
You know best, of course, but as both my German and Belgian colleagues have been consulted and are likely to be consulted again, I should have thought that they

might do less harm if given the lead by their own Governments and clearly instructed only to speak if and when consulted. At present they might do a lot of harm by giving bad advice, which they would hardly dare to do if instructed in contrary sense. I am, of course, unable to judge whether the relations of His Majesty's Government with the German Government are such as to make such a request on our part possible. My Italian colleague accuses the German Minister of working against us, but I am doubtful whether he has any foundation for such accusations.

No. 221.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 86.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, June 24, 1927.

YOUR telegram No. 101 of 18th June.

His Majesty's representatives at Berlin and Brussels are being instructed by despatch to inform the Governments to which they are accredited that, in view of the misapprehension and distrust that appear still to exist on the subject among Abyssinians, who will very possibly seek the advice of the German/Belgian Legation in the matter, if they have not done so already, His Majesty's Government would be grateful if the German/Belgian representatives at Addis Ababa might, if occasion arises, make it clear that Berlin/Brussels consider the scheme not only harmless but actually to the advantage of Abyssinia.

No. 222.

[J 1666/24/1]

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 196.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 25, 1927.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 80 of the 11th instant regarding the proposed road from the Sudan to Lake Tsana, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a letter from Sir George Schuster enclosing a report (without enclosure) from Major Cheesman on this subject. The advantages of the southern route for this road, as advanced in this report by Major Cheesman, hardly appear sufficient to justify a modification of the opinion expressed in my telegram under reference. In the event, however, of the Tsana negotiations being for some reason or other delayed, or of an opportunity arising of securing a wording in article 7 of the memorandum which will provide for either road being decided on, you should take occasion to effect the necessary modification.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

Enclosure 1 in No. 222.

Sir G. Schuster to Mr. Murray.

*Sudan Government, London Office,
Buckingham Gate, June 17, 1927.*

Dear Murray,

WITH reference to your letter of the 8th instant, I have now received copy of Cheesman's letter. I do not think we are likely to change from the Gallabat route for the purpose of Lake Tsana, but if Bentinck can, before any treaty is finally signed, get the clause about the road so worded as to give us a choice of either route, I should say let him do so.

Yours, &c.

GEORGE SCHUSTER.

Enclosure 2 in No. 222.

Major Cheesman to Mr. MacMichael.

Dear MacMichael,

Dangila, May 4, 1927.

I AM sending another semi-private note on the information obtained on my return journey from Wanbera to Dangila which may be important, and it seems best to get it placed on record somewhere and not wait for a report, although I am not in favour generally of sending semi-digested material.

I came back by a route which covers country practically unmapped and seemingly untravelled by any European before; if they have been on it they have made astoundingly little use of their opportunities. The chief point that has come out of it is that I have, I think, found the right alignment for a railway, motor road or camel road from the Sudan to Lake Tsana, or perhaps we might say that it is the line an engineer should inspect before he goes to any other in case the necessity of such rail or motor road should arise. The difficulty of all previous routes has been that they all have to climb up a precipice from 2,000 to 3,000 feet high to get on to the high plateau levels of Lake Tsana; by this route one avoids precipices altogether and comes up through a low saddle in the long escarpment, the rise being so gradual with a natural ramp that I don't think an engineer would have any difficulty in laying the metals of a railway without any cuttings, embankments or tunnels. Perhaps a few curves would be required just at the saddle where the rise is 200 or 300 feet and the line could not be laid straight over it. Cars would have no difficulty, and I think I could get a Ford over without any road-making at all. But all this is for an engineer to say. All I have to do is to place its existence on record. Why no one has ever found it before is hard to explain. It is the nearest pass to this consulate, visible from this house and about 3 miles away, is regularly used by Dangila merchants going to Wanbera, and yet I have been here over a year and had never heard of it. The fact is that you have to find out everything for yourself in this country; every inch has to be personally investigated. Mr. Herbert, of the Tsana Mission, who either came or went by Roseires, missed this saddle and went about 8 miles north of it, climbed to the top of the hills of the escarpment and scrambled down the precipice by Daffit Spur. It seems that Dangila merchants only go to Wanbera town, whence they return, while Wanbera merchants take the trade goods from Wanbera to Roseires, so it might not occur to an Abyssinian that it is one of the Roseires routes. It is, moreover, longer than the route Herbert took. I don't know that the saddle has any particular name, but it connects the district of Chara with the district of Dangila, and is in Bacha parish, on the east or Dangila side. It has the Saguma Mountain on the north and Maru Tarara on the south (a fair-sized hill). I have seen a good deal of the escarpment now and think it might be said that this is the only pass that avoids the precipice. The drawback of adopting the Wanbera route to Roseires is Wanbera itself. Wanbera is a big district with high and low country, but Wanbera Town is in the middle of a high plateau rising isolated out of low country to about 3,000 feet. The Abyssinian has taken the trade road out of the direct line to Bumbode in order to climb this 3,000 feet above it and down the other side. From the view of the country, it seems by avoiding Wanbera Town a good road alignment could be found through the low country to the north of the hills of Wanbera, but there is no road there now as far as I could hear. Mr. Herbert's report on his route seems to show that, excepting the climb on the precipice at Daffit Spur, the rest of the road to Roseires was not difficult. His route also crosses the Balas River much higher up-stream, which would have advantages in flood. I think, therefore, it would be advisable for an engineer to examine the possibility of combining the two routes, using Herbert's from Roseires up to about Belia Mountain and finding a connection, and afterwards using my route over the escarpment and on to Lake Tsana.

The rough sketch map will give an idea. It is, of course, not drawn to scale and bearings not accurate.

The advantage of this route is that by avoiding the precipice the road can be constructed much cheaper than previous estimates, and by taking it direct to the lake outlet, which seems possible, the barge route across the lake, which is part of the Gallabat route scheme, would be avoided, also the twice handling of all the goods.

Yours, &c.

R. E. CHEESMAN.

[J 1757/24/1]

No. 223.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received June 27.)

(No. 160. Very Confidential.)

Addis Ababa, May 30, 1927.

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 92 of to-day's date, I have the honour to report that I saw Ras Kassa yesterday evening and that we talked on various subjects, amongst them the Tsana question. Ras Kassa told me that he had been shown the memorandum which I had handed to Ras Tafari, and he seemed to be aware that we should discuss it again before it was officially handed to the Empress. Ras Kassa expressed the opinion that an agreement on the lines suggested would be to the advantage of both countries. He added that no doubt a few things would require some alteration. Like Ras Tafari, he thought that it should be as specific and clear as possible, but on the whole he did not think we should encounter any great difficulty in reaching an agreement. He thought that it would be principally a matter of bargaining.

2. Ras Kassa told me he had also heard that after the agreement had been signed one of the King's sons was to visit this country, and he seemed to be pleased at the prospect. In spite of everything, he thought the Abyssinians really appreciated the British and admired their point of view. Our conduct after the Battle of Magdala had won for us universal respect. We could then have taken the whole country if we had wished. Instead of that we had merely released the prisoners and gone away.

3. I warned Ras Kassa against intriguers, who were sure to do their utmost to prevent us reaching an agreement on the Tsana question. The Ras seemed to be fully alive to this danger, but in return he advised me as a friend not to call in the help of a third party, meaning, but without naming, the Italian Minister. He spoke most decidedly on this point. We were quite capable, he said, of negotiating our own agreement without help from others. If I should ask what he called "the third party" to assist me and "the third party" should endeavour to do so, this would immediately put up the backs of the Abyssinians. If, on the other hand, "the third party" should endeavour to wreck our negotiations, he would not be listened to.

4. In the above connection I may mention that my staff agree with me in holding that Ras Kassa is perhaps the only Abyssinian we can trust, and I look to him, as I told him, to support me in the forthcoming negotiations. I wish we could all feel as happy about the part which the third party may play in the game. All I want, as I have said before, is that my colleagues shall adopt a friendly neutrality. I have long realised that it is for me to take my own chestnuts out of the fire.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch by safe opportunity to Cairo and Khartum.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.